LEGENDARY
TALES OF THE HIGHLANDS.

VOL. II.

LEGENDARY

TALES OF THE HIGHLANDS.

A SEQUEL TO

HIGHLAND RAMBLES.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "LOCHANDHU," "THE WOLFE OF BADENOCH," "THE MORAY FLOODS," ETC.

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HIGHLAND RAMBLES.

THE LEGEND OF CHARLEY STEWART TÀILLEAR-CRUBACH.

THERE is a long, low, flat-topped, and prettily wooded eminence, that rises out of the middle of the bonny haughs of Kilmaichly, at some distance below the junction of the rivers Aven and Livat. I don't remember that it has any particular name, but it looks, for all the world, like the fragment of some ancient plain, that must have been of much higher level than that from which it now rises, which fragment had been left, after the ground on each side of it had been worn down to its present level, by the changeful operations of the neighbouring streams. But whatever

you geology gentlemen might say, as to what its origin might have been, every lover of nature must agree, that it is a very beautiful little hill, covered as its slopes are with graceful weeping birches, and other trees. The bushes that still remain, show that, in earlier times, it must have been thickly wooded with great oaks, which probably gave shelter to the ould auncient Druids, when engaged in their superstitious mysteries. At the period to which the greater part of my story belongs—that is, in and about that of the reign of King James the III.—the blue smoke that curled up from among the trees betrayed the existence of a cottage, that sat perched upon the brow of its western extremity, looking towards the Castle of Drummin. This little dwelling was much better built, and, in every respect, much neater than any of those in the surrounding district; and its interior exhibited more comforts as to furniture and *plenishing* of all sorts, and those too of a description, superior to any thing of the kind which a mere cottager might have been reasonably expected to have possessed.

The inhabitants of this snug little dwelling were, a very beautiful woman, of some four or five and twenty years of age, named Alice Asher, and her son, a handsome noble looking boy, who, from certain circumstances affecting his birth, bore the name of Charles Stewart.

There was a well doing and brave retainer of the house of Clan-Allan, called MacDermot, who had lived a little way up in Glen Livat, and who, for several years, had done good service to the Sir Walter Stewart, who was then chieftain of the Clan, as son and heir of that Sir Patrick whom my last Legend left so happily married to the Lady Catherine Forbes, and quietly settled at Drummin. This man MacDermot died bravely in a skirmish, leaving a widow and an infant daughter. It happened that some few months after the death of her husband, the good woman Bessy MacDermot went out to shear one of those small patches of wretched corn, which were then to be seen, almost as a wonder, scattered here and there, in these upland glens, and which belonged in *run-rig*, or in alternate ridges, to different owners,

being so disposed, as you probably know gentlemen, that all might have an equal interest, and consequently an equal inducement, to assemble for its protection in the event of the sudden appearance of an enemy. Charley Stewart, then a fine, kind-hearted boy of some nine or ten years of age, had taken a great affection for the little Rosa, the child of Bessy MacDermot; and this circumstance had induced the mother to ask permission of Alice Asher, to be allowed to take her son with her on this occasion to the harvest-field, that, whilst she went on with her work, he might watch the infant. Charley was delighted with his employment; and accordingly she laid the babe carefully down by him to leeward of one of the *stooks* of sheaves. Many an anxious glance did the fond mother throw behind her, as the onward progress of her work slowly but gradually increased her distance from Charley and his precious charge. The thoughts of her bereft and widowed state saddened her heart, and made it heavy, and rendered her eyes so moist from time to time, that ever and anon she was

compelled to rest for an instant from her labour, in order to wipe away the tears with her sleeve. Her little Rosa was now all the world to her. The anxiety regarding the child which possessed her maternal bosom was always great; but, at the present moment, she had few fears about her safety, for, ever as she looked behind her, she beheld Charley Stewart staunchly fixed at his post, and busily employed in trying to catch the attention of the infant, and to amuse it by plucking from the sheaves those gaudy flowered weeds, of various kinds and hues, which Nature brought up everywhere so profusely among the grain, and which the rude and unlearned farmers of those early times took no pains to extirpate.

Whilst the parties were so occupied, the sun was shining brightly upon the new shorn stubble, that stretched away before the eyes of Charley Stewart, when its flat unbroken field of light was suddenly interrupted by a shadow that came sailing across it. He looked up into the air, and beheld a large bird hovering over him. Inexperienced as he was, and by no means aware that

its apparent size was diminished by the height at which it was flying, he took it for a kite, or a buzzard, and it immediately ceased to occupy his attention. Round and round sailed the shadow upon the stubble, increasing in magnitude at every turn it made, but totally unheeded by the boy amid the interesting occupation in which he was engaged. At length a loud shriek reached him from the very farther end of the ridge. Charley started up from his sitting position, and beheld Bessy MacDermot rushing towards him, tossing her arms, and screaming as if she were distracted. She was yet too far off from him to enable him to gather her words, amidst the alarm that now seized him; and, accordingly, believing that she had been stung by some viper, or that she had cut herself desperately with the reaping-hook, he abandoned his charge, and ran off to meet her, that he might the sooner render her assistance; but, by the time they had approached near enough to each other to enable him to catch up the import of her cries, he halted—for they made his little heart faint within him.

"The eagle! the eagle!" wildly screamed Bessy MacDermot. "Oh, my child! my child!"

Turning round hastily, Charley Stewart now saw that the very bird which he had so recently regarded with so little alarm, had now grown six times larger than he had believed it really to be. It was in the very act of swooping down upon the infant. Charley ran towards the spot, mingling his shrieks with those of the frantic mother; but ere their feet had carried them over half the distance towards it, they heard the cries of the babe, as the fell eagle was flapping his broad wings, in his exertions to lift it from the ground; and, ere they could reach it, the bird was already flying, heavily encumbered with his burden, over the surface of the standing corn, from which he gradually rose, as his pinions gained more air, and greater way, till he finally soared upwards, and then held on his slow, but strong course, towards his nest in the neighbouring mountains.

"Oh, my babe! my babe!" cried the agonized Bessy MacDermot, her eyes starting from

their very sockets, in her anxiety to keep sight of the object of her affections, and her terrors.

But she did not follow it with her eyes alone. She paused not for a moment, but darted off through the standing corn, and over moor and moss, hill and heugh, and through woods, and rills, and bogs, in the direction which the eagle was taking, without once thinking of poor little Charley Stewart, who kept after her as hard as his active little legs could carry him; and, great as the distance was which they had to run, the eagle, impeded as he was in his flight by the precious burden he carried, was still within reach of the eyes of the panting and agonized mother, when a thinner part of the wood enabled her to see, from a rising ground, the cliff where he finally rested, and where he deposited the child in his nest, that was well known to hang on a ledge in the face of the rock, a little way down from its bare summit. On ran the frantic mother, with redoubled energy,—for she remembered that an old man lived by himself, in a little cot hard by the place, and she never

rested till she sank down, faint and exhausted, at his door.

"Oh, Peter, Peter!—my baby, my baby!" was all she could utter, as the old man came hobbling out, to learn what was the matter.

"What has mischanced your baby, Mrs. MacDermot?" demanded Peter.

"Oh, the eagle! the eagle!" cried the distracted mother. "Oh, my child! my child!"

"Holy saints be about us! has the eagle carried off your child?" cried Peter, in horror.

"Och, yes, yes!" replied Bessy. "Oh my baby, my baby!"

"St. Michael be here!" exclaimed Peter. "What can an old man like me do to help thee?"

"Ropes! ropes!" cried little Charley Stewart, who at this moment came up, so breathless and exhausted that he could hardly speak.

"Ropes!" said Peter; "not a rope have I. There's a bit old hair-line up on the baulks there, to be sure, that my son Donald used for stretching his hang-net; but it has been so much in the water, that I have some doubt if it would stand the weight of a man, even if we

could get a man to go down over the nose of the craig ;—and there is not a man but myself, that I know of, within miles of us."

" You have forgotten me," cried Charley Stewart, who had now somewhat recovered his wind. " I will go down over the craig. Come, then, Peter !—get out your hair-line. It will not break with my weight."

" By the Rood but thou art a gallant little chield !" said Peter.

" Oh, the blessings of the virgin on thee, my dearest Charley !" cried Bessy MacDermot, embracing him. " And yet," added she, with hesitation, " why should I put Alice Asher's boy to such peril, even to save mine own child ? Oh, canst thou think of no other means ? I cannot put Charley Stewart in peril."

" Nay," said Peter, " I know of no means ; and, in truth, the poor bairn is like enough to have been already half devoured by the young eagles."

" Merciful Mother of God !" cried poor Bessy, half fainting at the horrible thought. " Oh, my baby, my baby !"

"Come, old man," cried Charley Stewart, with great determination, "we have no time to waste—we have lost too much already. Where is the hair-line you spake of?—Tut, I must seek for it myself;" and rushing into the cot, he leaped upon a table, made one spring at the rafters, and, catching hold of them, he hoisted himself up, gained a footing on them, and ran along them like a cat, till he found the great bundle of hair-line. "Now," said he, throwing it down, and jumping after it; "come away, good Peter, as fast as thy legs can carry thee."

Having reached the summit of the crag by a circuitous path, they could now descry the two eagles, to which the nest belonged, soaring aloft at a great distance. They looked over the brow of the cliff, as far as they could stretch with safety, but although old Peter was so well acquainted with the place where the nest was built, as at once to be able to fix on the very spot whence the descent ought to be made, the verge of the rock there projected itself so far

over the ledge where the nest rested, as to render it quite invisible from above. They could only perceive the thick sea of pine foliage that rose up the slope below, and clustered closely against the base of the precipice. A few small stunted fir trees grew scattered upon the otherwise bare summit where they stood. Old Peter sat himself down behind one of these, and placed a leg on each side of it, so as to secure himself from all chance of being pulled over the precipice by any sudden jerk, whilst Charley's little fingers were actively employed in undoing the great bundle of hair-line, and in tying one end of it round his body, and under his armpits. The unhappy mother was now busily assisting the boy, and now moving restlessly about, in doubtful hesitation whether she should yet allow him to go down. Now she was gazing at the distant eagles, and wringing her hands in terror lest they should return to their nest; and torn as she was between her cruel apprehensions for her infant on the one hand, and her doubts and fears about Charley Stewart on the other,

she ejaculated the wildest and most incoherent prayers to all the saints for the protection and safety of both.

"Now," said Charley Stewart at length; "I'm ready. Keep a firm hold, Peter, and lower me gently."

"Stay, stay, boy!" cried the old man. "Stick my skian dhu into your hoe. If the owners of the nest should come home, by the Rood, but thou will't need some weapon to make thee in some sort a match for them, in the welcome they will assuredly give thee."

Charley Stewart slipped the skian dhu into his hoe, and went boldly but cautiously over the edge of the cliff. He was no sooner fairly swung in air than the hair rope stretched to a degree so alarming that Bessy MacDermot stood upon the giddy verge, gnawing her very fingers, from the horrible dread that possessed her, that she was to see it give way and divide. Peter sat astride against the root of the tree, carefully eyeing every inch of the line ere he allowed it to pass through his hands, and every now and then pausing—hesitating, and shaking his head

most ominously, as certain portions of it, here and there, appeared to him to be of doubtful strength. Meanwhile, Charley felt himself gradually descending, and turning round and round at the end of the rope, by his own weight, his brave little heart beating, and his brain whirling, from the novelty and danger of his daring attempt—the screams of the young eagles sounding harshly in his ears, and growing louder and louder as he slowly neared them. By degrees he began distinctly to hear the faint cries of the child, and his courage and self-possession were restored to him, by the conviction that she was yet alive. In a few moments more he had the satisfaction to touch the ledge of rock with his toes, and he was at last enabled to relieve the rope from his weight, by planting himself upon its ample, but fearfully inclined surface. He shouted aloud, to make Peter aware that the line had so far done its duty, and then he cautiously approached the nest, where, to his great joy, he found the infant altogether uninjured, except by a cross cut upon her left cheek, which she seemed to have received from some accidental

movement of the beak or talons of one of the two eaglets, between which she had been deposited by the old eagle. Had she not been placed between two so troublesome mates, and in a position so dangerous, nothing could have been more snug or easy than the bed in which the little Rosa was laid. The nest was about two yards square. It was built on the widest and most level part of the ledge, and it was composed of great sticks, covered with a thick layer of heather, over which rushes were laid to a considerable depth. Fortunately for the infant, the eaglets had been already full gorged ere she had been carried thither, and there yet lay beside them the greater part of the carcass of a lamb, and also a mountain hare, untouched, together with several moorfowl, and an immense quantity of bones and broken fragments of various animals.

Charley Stewart did not consume much time in his examination of the nest. Being at once satisfied that it would be worse than hazardous to trust the hair-line with the weight of the child, in addition to his own, he undid it from

his body. Approaching the nest, he gently lifted the crying infant from between its two screeching and somewhat pugnacious companions. The moment he had done so, the little innocent became quiet, and instantly recognising him, she held out her hands, and smiled and chuckled to him, at once oblivious of all her miseries. Charley kissed his little favourite over and over again, and then he proceeded to tie the rope carefully around and across her, so as to guard against all possibility of its slipping. Having accomplished this, he shouted to Peter to pull away—kissed the little Rosa once more, and then committed her to the vacant air. Nothing could equal the anxiety he endured whilst he beheld her slowly rising upwards. And when he beheld the mother's hands appear over the edge of the rock, and snatch her from his sight, nothing could match the shout of delight which he gave. The maternal screams of joy which followed, and which came faintly down to his ears, were to him a full reward for all the terrors of his desperate enterprise. For

that instant he forgot the perilous situation in which he then stood, and the risk that he had yet to run ere he could hope to be extricated from it.

But a few moments only elapsed ere all thoughts of any thing else but his own self preservation were banished from his mind. The angry screams of the two old eagles came fearfully through the air, and he beheld them approaching the rock, cleaving the air with furious flight. He cast one look upwards, and saw the rope rapidly descending to him—but the eagles were coming still faster, and he had only time to wrench out a large stick from the nest, to aid him in defending himself, when they were both upon him. He had nothing for it but to crouch as close in under the angle of the rock as he could, and there he planted himself, with the stick in his right hand, and the skian dhu in his left, resolved to make the best fight he could of it. They commenced their attack on him whilst still on the wing, by flying at him, and striking fiercely at him with their talons, each returning alternately to the assault after

making a narrow circuit in the air. Whilst thus engaged, Charley neither lost courage nor presence of mind, but contrived to deal to each of them a severe blow now and then with the rugged stick, as they came at him in succession. Finding that they could make no impression upon him in this way, sheltered as he was by his position under the projecting rock, they seemed at once to resolve, as if by mutual consent, to adopt a more resolute mode of attack.

Alighting on the ledge of rock at the same moment, one on each side of the place where he was crouching, both the eagles now assailed him at once with inconceivable ferocity. Half fronting that one which was to his right, he laid a severe blow on it, which somewhat staggered it in its onset. But whilst he was thus occupied with it, the other, which was to his left, tore open his cheek, with a blow of his talons, that had nearly stunned him. More from mechanical impulse, than from any actual design, he struck a back-handed blow with his skian dhu. Fortunately for him it proved most effectual, for it penetrated the eagle to the very heart, laid it

fluttering on its back, and, in the violence of its struggles, it rolled over the inclined ledge, and fell dead to the bottom of the crag. But poor Charley had no leisure to rejoice over this piece of success. He looked anxiously to the hair-line, which hung dangling within reach of his grasp; but, ere he could seize it, his other enemy was at him again. As if it had profited by the severe lessons it had gotten, the strokes of this second eagle were given with so much rapidity and caution, that close as Charley Stewart was obliged to keep into the angle of the rock, and stupified as he was, in some degree, by the wound he had received, he was able to do little more than to defend his own person from injury, whilst he was obliged slowly to give ground before his feathered assailant. Whilst retreating and fighting in this manner, one blow of his stick, better directed than the rest, struck the eagle on the side of the skull, close to its juncture with the neck, and it went fluttering down over the rock, in the pangs of death, after its fellow. But alas! poor Charley Stewart's victory cost him dear.

The two listeners above, who had seen the approach of the eagles, were dreadfully alarmed by the noise of the terrific conflict that was going on upon the ledge below. In vain did they shout to terrify the birds. In vain did old Peter frequently try the hair-line, by pulling gently at it, in the hope of finding that the weight of Charley's body was attached to it. They were tortured by anxious uncertainty regarding him, until a piercing shriek came upwards from him, and all was quiet. Winged by terror, Bessy MacDermot rushed, with her child in her arms, down the winding path, to a point whence she could command a view of the ledge. The boy was no longer there!—She rubbed her dimmed eyes, gave one more intent gaze. From the very nature of the place, it was impossible that he could be there unseen by her, from the point she now occupied, and she was thus too certainly assured that he was gone. Uttering a despairing scream, she flew franticly down to look for him among the trees at the bottom of the cliff. There she sought all along the base of it, dreading every moment to have

her eyes shocked with the sight of his mangled remains, and uttering the most doleful lamentations that she had murdered her dear friend's gallant boy. She found both the dead eagles indeed, but she could see nothing of Charley Stewart. Old Peter then came hobbling after her, to join her in her search, and both of them went over the ground again and again in vain. A faint hope began at length to arise in the minds of both, that he might, after all, be still on the ledge above, though, perhaps, lying wounded, or in a swoon; and, although both felt it to be almost against all reason to indulge in it, they instantly prepared to return, to endeavour more perfectly to ascertain the fact; and, if it could be done no otherwise, Bessy MacDermot resolved to run and rouse the country, in order to procure strong ropes, and men to go down to examine the ledge itself.

Full of these intentions, they were in the act of quitting the bottom of the cliff, when a faint voice arrested their steps. They stopped to listen, and, after a little time, they were aware that it came down from over their heads. They

looked up, but, seeing nothing, they became more than ever convinced, that it was Charley's voice calling to them from the ledge, and they again turned to hurry away to assure him of help. But the voice came again, and so much stronger, as to satisfy them that the speaker could be at no very great distance from them.

"Peter!—Bessy!—I am here in the tree," said Charley Stewart, "for the love of Saint Michael, stop and take me down!"

Some minutes elapsed before they could catch a glimpse of the poor boy. At length they discovered him, half way up a tall pine tree, hanging by his little coat to the knag of a broken branch. I may as well tell you at once how he came there. Whilst he was in the very act of dealing that last well directed blow of the stick, that proved so fatal to the second eagle, his foot slipped on the narrower and more inclined part of the ledge, to which he had been gradually driven back during the combat, and uttering that despairing scream which rang like his knell in the affrighted ears of Bessy MacDermot, and Peter, he fell through the air, and

crashed down among the dense foliage of the pine-tops below. One of his legs was broken across a bough, which it met with in his descent through the tree, but his head, and all his other vital parts, had luckily escaped injury ; and the knag, which so fortunately caught his clothes, and kept him suspended, had been the providential means of saving him from that death, which he must have otherwise inevitably met with on coming to the ground.

But how were they to get poor Charley down from the tree? Old Peter could not climb it; but, seeing that it was furnished with branches nearly to its root, Bessy MacDermot gave her child into the hands of the old man, and, taking a double end of the hair-line with her, she clambered up the stem to the place where the boy was hanging. Tenderly relieving him from his distressing position, she quickly passed two or three double folds of the rope around him, and then lowered him gently down to Peter. So patient had Charley been under his sufferings, excruciating as they were, that it was not until

they were about to move him from the ground, that they discovered the injury that his limb had received.

" Oh, what shall I do?" cried Bessy MacDermot, wringing her hands ; " Oh, how can I face Alice Asher, after thus causing so sad a mischance to her darling, her beautiful boy?"

" Tut, Bessy, never mind me!" said Charley faintly, but with a gentle smile, that sorted but ill with his wounded and bloody countenance; " I shall soon get the better of all this ; but if it had been twice as bad with me, Bessy, nay, if I had been killed outright, I should have well deserved it, for quitting my poor little Rosa there, as I did upon the harvest rig."

" Nay, nay, my dearest boy, Charley," said Mrs. MacDermot, kissing him, and weeping fondly over him; " thou did'st thy part faithfully. Had it not been for my foolish fright, and my silly screams when I first saw the eagle, thou wouldst never have left my child, and nought of these sad mischances could have happened."

With some difficulty, and not without Bessy MacDermot's help, old Peter managed to carry Charley Stewart down to his hut, whence he was afterwards moved home, when proper assistance could be procured. Alice Asher was overpowered with grief, when the darling of her heart was brought to her in this melancholy and maimed condition. But she readily forgave Bessy MacDermot for the innocent share she had had in producing it; and after Charley's wounds were dressed, the bones of his fractured limb set, and that she was satisfied that his life was perfectly safe, she not only felt grateful to God that he had been so wonderfully preserved, but she began to regard him with honest pride for the gallant action he had performed.

"Well hast thou proved thyself, my boy, to be a true Clan-Allan Stewart!" said she to him, with a deep blush on her countenance, as she sat fondly watching by the bed where Charley was quietly sleeping, from the effects of the drugs that had been given to him, till the tears began to follow one another fast from her eyelids. "Well might thy father now, methinks, make

thee his lawful son, by extending to me those holy rites, the false hope of obtaining which betrayed mine innocent and simple youth! Thou at least ought not to suffer for thine unhappy mother's fault, which now nearly nine years of sorrow, of remorse, and of heart-felt penitence, and prayer, and penance, have not yet expiated! But God's holy will be done!"

Poor afflicted Alice Asher had occasion to repeat these last words of pious resignation to the will of God, more than once after the recovery of her son. She was deeply grateful to Heaven indeed, that his life had been spared to her, and that his health and strength were completely restored to him, but his handsome countenance had been greatly and permanently disfigured, by the deep cross-like scar that remained upon his left cheek, and the grace of his person had been much destroyed by the limping of his left leg, occasioned by the bad surgery of the rude practitioner who had set the broken bones. She bore this affliction, as she did all others, with meek submission, as a divine chastisement which her sin had well merited, though she wept to think

that she had been visited by it through the suffering of her innocent boy. Some eight or nine long years passed away, during which Sir Walter Stewart of Drummin was liberal in providing richly for the wants of the mother, as well as for the education of her son, though he strictly avoided seeing either of them. The story of Charley's brave achievement, and severe accident, reached him not, for he was at that time abroad upon his travels in foreign lands; and, ere he returned home, the talk about it had died away, so that it had never been permitted to exercise any influence upon him whatsoever.

Passing over these years, then, we find Alice Asher, paler and thinner than before, but still most beautiful, sitting one morning, at the window of her cottage, that looked towards the tower of Drummin, which was partially seen from it, through between the thick stems of the trees. Her elbow rested on the window-sill, and supported her head, which was surrounded by a broad fillet of black silk, from beneath which her hair clustered in fair ringlets around her finely formed features, and fell in long tresses

over her neck and shoulders. Her close fitting kirtle, and her loose and flowing gown, were of sad-coloured silk, and the embroidered bosom of her snow-white smock was fastened with a golden brooch, that sparkled with precious stones, and more than one of her fingers glittered with rings of considerable value. Alice was not always wont to be so adorned; but, ornamented as she thus was, beyond the simplicity of that attire which she usually wore, her countenance bore no corresponding expression of gladness upon it. She sat gazing silently towards the distant stronghold of the Clan-Allan Stewarts, sighing deeply from time to time, until the thoughts that filled her heart gradually dimmed her large blue eyes, and the tears swelled over her eyelids, and ran down her cheeks, and she finally began to relieve the heaviness of her soul, by thinking aloud in broken and unconscious soliloquy.

"Aye! he is going to-day!" said she, in a melancholy tone. "He is going to the court, to mix with the great, the proud, the gay, and the beautiful; and I shall not see him ere he goes! Yet the vow of separation which we mutually

took, had a saving condition in it. He might have come—he may at any time approach me—aye, and honourably too—when the object of his visit may be to do me and my boy justice. But, after so many years have passed away in disappointment, why should my fond and foolish heart still cling to deceitful hope? a hope, too, that wars with those of a purer and holier nature, which may yet ally me, a penitent sinner, to Heaven. Then, what have I to do with those glittering gauds that would better become a bride? Yet they are his pledges, if not of love, at least of kindness and of friendship, sent to me from time to time, to show me that I am not altogether forgotten; and surely there can be no harm in my wearing them? and then to-day—to-day, methought that he might have come. But if he had ever intended to come, would he have sent, as he has done, for Charley? Oh, my boy! would that he could but think of doing thee justice, and thy poor sinful mother would die contented! But, if he is pleased with the youth, may he not yet come hither along with him? How my silly heart beats at the

very thought! What sound was that I heard? Can it be them?—No, no, no, he will never come more to me!—Alas, alas! my poor boy's face and person have suffered too much to win a father's eye, and he knows not the virtues that lie so modestly concealed within them. But what is that I see yonder?—The bustle of the horsemen before the gate, with their pampered steeds and their gay attire—their pennons fluttering, and the sun glancing from the broad blades of their Highland spears?—What!—was that a distant bugle blast I heard?—Again!—Then they are moving—aye, indeed! They are now galloping off along the terrace!—Alas, alas, they are gone! and my vain and foolish hopes have gone with them!"

These last words were uttered in the deepest tone of anguish, and Alice drew hastily back into the darkest recess of the apartment, where she seated herself, covered her face with the palms of her hands, and wept aloud. Having thus given full vent to her feelings, she retired to the privacy of her closet, where she endeavoured to divert her mind by holy exercise from

the sorrows that oppressed her. At length, a gentle tap at the door informed her that her son had returned from his visit to Drummin, and tremblingly anxious to know the result of it, she immediately admitted him.

" Mother! my dearest mother!" said Charley Stewart, tenderly embracing her, and with a manifest effort to subdue certain emotions that were working within him; " Why hast thou been weeping?"

" Alas! I weep often, my beloved, my darling boy!" replied she, warmly responding to his caresses; " I weep, and I deserve to weep! But hast thou aught of tidings for me, that may give me a gleam of joy?—Say—how wert thou received?"

" Why, well, mother!" replied Charley, endeavouring to assume a lively air; " I was well and kindly received, though neither, forsooth, with parade of arms, nor with flourish of trumpets, nor of clarions; but Sir Walter received me kindly."

" Did he embrace thee, dear Charley?" de-

manded his mother, with great anxiety of expression.

"Um——Aye," replied her son, with some degree of hesitation; "he did embrace me, though hardly indeed with the same fervour that thou art wont to do, dearest mother. But then thou knowest, mother, that Sir Walter is a courtly knight of high degree, and they tell me that the fashion of such folks allows them not to yield themselves altogether, as we humbler people are wont to do, to the feelings that are within us."

"Alas! thou say'st that which is but too true!" replied Alice, in a desponding tone; "but go on, boy."

"Sir Walter put his hand on my shoulder, and turned me round," continued Charley. "Then he made me walk a step or two, and eyed me narrowly from top to toe, pretty much as if he had been scanning the points and paces of a new horse.—'How camest thou so lame and so disfigured?' demanded he.—'By a fall I had in climbing to an eagle's nest,' replied I.—'A

silly cause,' said Sir Walter; 'and yet, perhaps, the bold blood that is in thee must bear the blame. But know, boy, that fate hath not given to all the power to climb into the eyry of the eagle.' And having said this much he changed the subject of his talk."

"Would that thou could'st but have gathered courage enow to have told him all the circumstances of that adventure!"

"Nay, mother, I had courage for any thing but to speak aught that might have sounded like mine own praise," replied Charley.

"Would that he but knew thee as thou art!" said Alice, with a sigh. "Would that he but knew the soul that is within thee! With all his faults—and perhaps they are light, save that which concerns thee alone—he hath a generous spirit himself, and he could not but prize a generous spirit in one so kindred to him. But tell me all that passed. Did—did he—did he ask thee for tidings of me?"

"He did question me most particularly about thee," replied Charley. "He questioned me as if he would have fain gathered from me the

appearance and condition of every, the minutest feature of thy face, and of every line of thy form. He questioned as if with the intent of limning thy very portrait on the tablet of his mind; and, as if he would have traced it beside some picture, which he still wore in fresh and lively colours there, for the purpose, as it seemed to me, of making close and accurate comparison between them. Thus he would pause at times during his questioning of me; and, after a few moments of deep abstraction, he would say, as if forgetful of my presence, and in converse with himself alone. 'Strange! aye, but she was then but fifteen, scarce ripened into woman—the change is nothing more than natural—the same loveliness, but more womanly;' and so he went on, now to question, and now to talk of thee, for a good half hour or so."

"And he!" cried Alice, with unwonted animation; "Say, boy, looked he well? I mean in health; for of his manly beauty, his tall and well knit form, his graceful air, his noble bearing, and his eagle eye! how could I have lived till now, without hearing from those who have

seen and admired him?. Alas!" added she, in a melancholy and subdued tone, "of such things I have perhaps inquired too much!"

"Sir Walter had all the ruddy hue, as well as the firmness of vigorous health, dear mother," replied the youth.

"Thanks be to all the saints!" exclaimed Alice fervently; "Then, come boy—tell me what passed between you?"

"After all his questions touching thee and thy health were done," said Charley, "and that we had talked of other matters of no import, he sat him down, and thus gravely addressed me as I stood before him: 'I have been thinking how best to provide for thee, boy. I can see that thou art but ill fitted for hardy service, or the toils of war. And, by the Rood, it is well for thee that, in these times, there are other ways of winning to high fortune, yea, and to royal favour even, besides that which leads to either by doughty deeds of arms, where so many perish ere they have half completed the toilsome and perilous journey. Thou must content thee, then, with some peaceful trade. Let me see—let me

see. Ah! I have it. Now-a-days, men have more chance to push themselves forward by the point of the needle, than by the point of the lance. What thinkest thou of Master Hommil, the king's tailor, who, as all men say, hath a fair prospect of shaping such a garb for himself, as may yet serve him to wear for a peer's robes, if he doth but use his sheers with due discretion? This is the very thing for thee, and it is well that I have so luckily hit on it. I'll have thee apprenticed to a tailor, and, when thy time is out, I'll have thee so taught in all the more curious mysteries of thine art, by its very highest professors, that none in the whole land shall be found to equal thee. Thou shalt travel to France for learning in the nicer parts of thy trade, and then, I will set thee up, close under the royal eye, with such a stock of rarest articles in thy shop, as shall make it a very Campvere, for the variety and richness of its merchandize. But thou must begin thy schooling under Master Jonathan Junkins here, who, though but a country cultivator of cabbage, hath an eye towards the cut of a cloak or doublet, that might

well beget the jealousy of the mighty Hommil himself. I once wore a rose-coloured suit of Jonathan's make, that did excite the envy, yea, and the anger, too, of that great master, by the commendations that royalty himself was heard to pass upon it. Though there were some there, who, from malice, no doubt, did say, that the merit lay more in the shape of the wearer, than in that of the garments. But I am trifling. I have some orders to give ere I mount, and this, as to thy matter with Junkins, shall be one; and time wears, boy, and thou, too, hast some little way before thee to limp home; therefore, God keep thee. Bear my love, or, as she would herself have it to be, my *friendship*, to thy mother. And, see here; give her this ring as a fresh remembrance of me. Farewell—I shall see that all be well arranged regarding thee ere I go; and I trust that thou wilt not idly baulk the prudent plans I have laid down for thee, or the good intentions I have towards thee; and so again, farewell, my boy!'—And thus, my dearest mother, was I dismissed."

"Well, God's will be done!" said Alice, with a deep sigh, after a long pause, and after having betrayed a variety of emotions during her son's narrative. "I had hoped better things for thee, my boy, but God's will be done! Thou hast no choice but to submit, Charley. Forget not that Sir Walter Stewart is thy father, and that thou art bound by the law of nature to obey him."

"It is because I do not forget that Sir Walter Stewart is my father, that I find it so hard a thing to obey him in this," said Charley, with a degree of excitement, which all his earnestly exerted self-command was, for the moment, unable entirely to control. "But, as it happens, that it is just because he is bound to me by the law of nature, and by no other law, that he thus condemns me to be nailed down to the shop-board of a tailor, instead of giving me a courser to ride, and a lance to wield, so, as thou most truly sayest dear mother, by the law of nature, but by that law alone, am I compelled to submit to this bitter mortification, and to obey him."

" Nay, nay, dearest Charley, talk not thus!" cried Alice, throwing her arms around her son's neck, and fondly kissing him; " talk not thus frowardly if thou lovest me!"

" Love thee, my dearest mother!" cried Charley, returning her embraces with intense fervour, and weeping from the overpowering strength of his feelings; " Nay, nay, thou canst not doubt my love to thee; thou canst not doubt that, on thy weal, or thy woe, hangs the happiness or the misery of your poor boy. Be not vexed, dearest mother, for though I have spoken thus idly, trust me that a father's word shall ever be with me as the strictest law, which I, so far as my nature can support me, shall never wilfully contravene."

Charley Stewart again tenderly embraced his mother, and, scarcely aware that he was leaving her to weep, he hurried away to seek some consolation for himself, in a quarter where he never failed to find it. This was at the cottage of Bessy MacDermot, whither he was wont frequently to wander, for the purpose of listening to the innocent prattle of his young plaything

Rosa, who, having now seen some eight or nine summers, was fast ripening into a very beautiful girl. As Charley approached the widow's premises on the present occasion, he found Rosa by the side of a clear spring, that bubbled and sparkled out from beneath a large mossy stone, that projected from the lower part of the slope of a flowery bank, under the pensile drapery of a grove of weeping birches. The moment she beheld him, she came tripping to meet him, with a rustic wreath of gay marsh marigolds and water-lilies in her hand.

"Where have you been all this long, long morning, dearest Charley?" cried Rosa; "I have been so dull without you; and see what a wreath I have made for your bonnet! But I have a great mind to wear it myself, for you don't deserve to have it, for being so long in coming to me."

"I have been over at the castle, Rosa," said Charley, stooping to embrace her, as she innocently held up her lips to be kissed by him. "I have been over at Drummin, looking at the grand array of steeds and horsemen. But what

are these flowers?—Water-lilies, as I hope to be saved! Holy Virgin! Rosa, how didst thou come by them?"

"I got them from the pool," replied Rosa, hesitating, and gently tapping his cheek with a few stray flowers which she held in her hand; "I got them in the same way that you pulled them for me the other day, that is with a long hazle rod, with a crook at the end of it."

"From the pool, Rosa?" cried Charley; "What could tempt thee to risk thy life for such trifles? If thou hadst slipt over the treacherous brink, where there was no one by to save thee—thou wert gone! irrecoverably gone! How couldst thou be so rash? my very flesh creeps to think on't!"

"Don't be angry with me, Charley!" said Rosa coaxingly—"what risk would I not run to give thee pleasure?"

"But you have given me any thing but pleasure in this matter, Rosa," said Charley; "I tremble too much to think of the hazard thou hast run, to look with pleasure on any thing that could have occasioned it."

"So thou wilt not let me put the wreath on thy bonnet, then?" said Rosa, with a tear half disclosing itself in her eye-lid; "Come, come, Charley! sit down—sit down on this bank, and do let me put it upon thy bonnet."

"If it will pleasure thee to make a fool of me, Rosa," said Charley, smiling on her, and kissing her; "Thou shalt do with me as thou mayest list."

"That is a dear kind Charley," cried Rosa, her moist eyes sparkling with delight, and throwing her arms around his neck; "I'll make no fool of thee: I'll make thee so handsome!"

"Handsome!" exclaimed Charley, laughing. "Why Rosa, it is making a fool of me, indeed, to say that thou can'st make me handsome, with this ugly deep cross-mark on my cheek."

"That cross-mark on your cheek, Charley!" cried the little girl, with an intensity of feeling much beyond anything which her years might have warranted; "To me that cross-mark is beautiful! I love that noble brow of thine—those eyes, that whenever they look upon me, tell me that I am dear to thee—those lips, that

so often kiss me, and instruct me, and say kind things to me—but that mark of the cross on thy cheek—oh, that hath to me a holy influence in't; it reminds me that, but for thy noble courage which earned it for thee, I should have been food for the young eagles of the craig. Charley! I could not fail to love thee, for thy kindness to me; but I never could have loved thee as I do love thee, but for these living marks which you bear of all that you suffered for thine own little Rosa. Kiss me my dear, dear Charley!"

"My little wifey!" cried Charley, clasping the innocent girl in his arms, and smothering her with kisses.

"Aye," said Rosa, artlessly, "I am thy little wifey. All the gossips say that I am fated to be so; for you know I have got my cross mark as well as you, aye, and on my left cheek too. The eagles did that kind turn for me. They marked us both with the cross alike. See! you can see my cross here quite plain."

"I do see it," said Charley, kissing the place.

" But thanks be to the Virgin thy beauty hath not suffered one whit by it. I can just discern that the mark is there, and that is all ; and I trust that it will altogether disappear as you grow up to be a woman."

" The Virgin forbid !" cried Rosa energetically. " The gossips say that we have been so miraculously signed with the cross expressly for each other, and I would not lose so happy a mark, no, not to be made a queen ! But do let me put on thy chaplet, dear Charley. I hope to see thee some day with a grand casque on thy head—a tilting spear in thy hand—bestriding a a noble steed, and riding at the ring with the best of them."

" Alas, Rosa !" said Charley, with a deep sigh, " that will never be my fate !"

" Why not ?" demanded Rosa ; " surely Sir Walter Stewart may make thee his esquire ?"

" Alas, no !" said Charley, despondingly. The casque he dooms me to is a tailor's cowl—the shield a thimble—the lance a needle—and the gallant steed I am to mount is a tailor's

shop-board, and if ever I tilt with silk, velvet, or gold, it will be to convert them into cloaks and doublets for my betters!"

"A tailor!" exclaimed Rosa, with astonishment; "surely thou art jesting, Charley."

"I'faith, it is too serious a matter to jest about," replied Charley. "Truly I am doomed to handle the goosing iron of Master Jonathan Junkins."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" shouted Rosa—"Ha, ha, ha, ha!—What an odd fancy of Sir Walter!"

"Nay, laugh not at my misery, Rosa," said Charley, gravely, and somewhat piteously. "I cannot bear the thought of such a life! What think you, Rosa, of being a tailor's wife?"

"So that thou wilt always call me thine own dear little wifey, I care not what thou art," replied Rosa, tenderly, and throwing her arms around his neck. "And why, after all, mayest thou not be quite happy as a tailor? Old Johnny Junkins sings at his task from morning till night. Besides, he hath no risk of being killed in battle, as my poor father was. He always sleeps in a whole skin, save when his

wife Janet beats him with the ell-wand, and surely thou wouldst have no fears that I should do that for thee, dear Charley?"

It was now Charley's turn to laugh, which he did very heartily, and having thus gained a temporary victory over his chagrin, he improved upon it by immediately taking a small Missal from his sporran, and commencing his daily occupation of giving instructions to Rosa, who greedily learned from him all that he could impart.

I mean now to give you some little account of Sir Walter Stewart, gentlemen. You must know that he was one of the prettiest and most accomplished men of his time, and a great favourite at court. His perfection in all warlike exercises—his fondness for horses—and his fearless riding, were qualifications which fitted him for being the companion of the king's brothers, the spirited Alexander Duke of Albany, and the tall and graceful John Earl of Mar, whilst his skill in fencing—his proficiency in music—and his taste in dress, secured for him a high place in the good graces of that elegant,

but weak monarch, James the Third. With young Ramsay of Balmain, afterwards created Earl of Bothwell, he was in the best habits of intimacy. But with the lower minions of the king, I mean, with such as Cochran the mason—Rogers the musician—Leonard the smith—Hommil the tailor—Torfefan the fencing-master, and Andrew the Flemish astrologer, he was more polite than familiar. With the ladies of the court Sir Walter Stewart was an object of admiration, nay, he was the theme of the praise of every one of them, from the beautiful, fascinating, and virtuous Queen Margaret herself, down to the humblest of her maids of honour. It is no wonder, then, that Sir Walter was induced to spend more of his time at court than among the wilds of his native mountains. On the occasion of which I am now speaking, he was on his way to the castle of Stirling, where James the Third was at that time residing, and after a long and tiresome journey, he and his attendants entered the city, and rode up to their hostel in the main street, at such an hour of the evening, as made

it neither very seemly nor very convenient for him to report himself to his majesty.

Sir Walter Stewart was too well known not to command immediate attention from every one belonging to the inn. The horse-boys, who were grooming the numerous steeds, that were hooked up to various parts of the walls surrounding the yard, made way respectfully, not only for himself, but also for his people and their animals, and the cattle of some persons of less note and consideration, were turned out of their stalls for the accommodation of his horses. Meanwhile, the knight was ushered up stairs into the common room, by mine host in person, who, with his portly figure, stripped to his close yellow jacket and galligaskins, and with a fair linen towel hanging from his girdle, puffed and sweated up the steps before him, his large rubicund visage vying in the brightness of its scarlet, with the fiery coloured cap of coarse red cloth which he wore. Sir Walter found the large apartment surrounded by oaken tables and chairs, which were occupied by various guests,

some eating, and some drinking, whilst the rattling of trenchers, the clinking of cans, the buzz of voices, and the hum of tongues, were so loud and continuous, as to render it difficult for him to detect a word of the conversation that was going on any where, except the clamorous calls for fresh supplies of provender, ale, or wine, which the bustling serving men and tapsters were hurrying to and fro to satisfy.

As the host showed Sir Walter to an unoccupied table at the upper end of the place, most of the guests arose and saluted him as he passed by them. To some of these he gave a condescending bow of recognition, whilst to others he hardly deigned to bestow more than a dignified acknowledgment of their courtesy. But he was no sooner seated, than he was left to his own reflections, for each man again turned his attention to his own particular comforts, and the knight was not sorry to be very soon enabled to do the same thing for himself, by paying his own addresses to the smoking pasty that was placed on the table before him. He had but

just finished his meal, when the host entered, ushering in a very elegant young man, the richness of whose attire, as well as the perfection of its make, together with his noble air, at once showed him to be a gentleman of the court. His rose-coloured jacket, and amber trewse, were of the richest silk, and made to fit tight, so as to show off, to the greatest advantage, his very handsome person. His girdle-belt of black velvet, together with the pouch of the same material, sparkled with gems, as did also the sheaths and hilts of his sword and dagger. Several rich chains of gold were hung about his neck; his shoes had those long thin points, which were worn at that period, though they were not, in his instance, carried to any very absurd extravagance. His cloak was of blue velvet richly bordered with silver, and his broad jewelled hat, of scarlet stuff of the same material, was drawn over one side of his head, as a necessary precaution of counterpoise to the weight of the long feathers of green, blue, red, and yellow, which stretched out from it so far as to threaten to overbalance it on

the other. From beneath this his brown hair hung down, curling over his ample brow, and spread itself in wide profusion over his shoulders.

" What, Ramsay!" exclaimed Sir Walter Stewart, rising to meet him with a cordial salutation, which again silenced the clatter of the trenchers and cans, and brought all eyes for some moments upon the two gentlemen. " This is a lucky meeting indeed."

" Lucky!" replied Ramsay, smiling jocularly; " what a boorish phrase!—It is indeed well worthy of one, who hath been rusticating so long amidst northern moors and mountains."

" Cry your mercy, my lord of the court," said Sir Walter Stewart, laughing.

" Nay," continued Ramsay; " I know not whether thy clownish expression be most discourteous to me, or to thyself,—to me, as it would deny me all credit for this mine expressly purposed visit to thee,—or to thyself, for supposing that such a preux-chevalier, as thou art, could be, for the smallest fraction of time, within the atmosphere of the court, without being run after by those who love thee."

"Thank thee! thank thee, my dear Ramsay," replied Sir Walter, shaking him cordially by the hand, and laughing heartily; "Then will I say, that it was most kind of thee to find me out so soon, and to come thus purposely to take a stoup of French claret with me, and to pour thine agreeable talk into mine ear, so as to fill the empty vessel of mine ignorance, to a level with that of thine own full knowledge of courtly affairs, and of all the interesting occurrents which have chanced about the court since I last left it. So, sit thee down, I pray thee. We shall be private enow at this table, which is well out of ear-shot of all those noisy gormandizers and guzzlers."

"Nay," replied Ramsay, as he seated himself beside his friend; "thine emptiness is of too vast a profundity for me to be able to fill it at this time. On some other occasion I shall do my best to replenish thee, when we can have leisure for a longer talk together, than we can look to have to-night. I came hither only to carry thee away with me."

"Whither wouldst have me go?" demanded

Sir Walter. "Trust me, I am more disposed, at this moment, to enjoy mine ease in mine inn, than to move any where else."

"But I must have thee," replied Ramsay; "rustic as thou art, thou must submit to be led by me for some little time, like a blind man who hath but newly recovered his eyesight, lest thou shouldst stumble amidst the blaze of courtly sunshine. I came to bring thee to a small supper, at the lodging of Sir William Rogers, that most cunning fingerer of the lute and harp, and whose practice thereupon," continued he, sinking his voice almost to a whisper, "seems to have taught him a most marvellous power, of bringing what music may be most profitable for himself, out of that strange and many-stringed instrument called a Royal Sovereign."

"Hush, hush, Ramsay!" replied Sir Walter. "Thy talk is dangerous in such a place as this. But say, does the King go to this party?"

"No," replied Ramsay; "He is to be employed to-night in the ocult science, to which he hath of late so much addicted himself. He is

to be occupied with that knave Andrew the Astrologer, in regarding and reading the stars."

"Then, what boots it for us to go to the party of this empty piece of sounding brass?" demanded Sir Walter.

"Much, much, my dear Stewart," replied Ramsay. "In the first place, thou shalt be introduced to his niece, who hath lately arrived from England. Thou shalt see and hear that fair Philomela, yclept Juliet Manvers, who plays and sings to admiration. Though here it behoves me, as thy friend, to bid thee take care of thy heart, for the uncle seems to have imported her, with the wise intent, of marrying her to some one of the court, and mine own heart hath already been very sorely assailed."

"A dangerous siren, truly!" said Sir Walter, laughing; "yet methinks I may safely enough bid defiance to her enchantment."

"We shall see," replied Ramsay, with a doubtful nod of his head; "But be that as it may, my second reason for taking thee thither, is that, with exception of our host himself, we may at least spend one tolerably pleasant even-

ing undrugged and unencumbered, with the base society of those vulgar fellows, whom the King, with so much mistaken judgment, hath chosen to associate in his favour, with two such well-born gentlemen as you and me. Cochran, that man whom nature hath built up of stone and mortar, and who would yet ape the graces of a finished lord of the court, as a bear would copy the gambols of a well educated Italian grey-hound."

"Hommil!" cried Sir Walter, laughing, and following up his friend's humour. "Hommil! that thread-paper, whose sword and dagger would be better removed, to have their places supplied by his shears and his bodkin."

"Leonard!" cried Ramsay, "Leonard! that man of iron, whose very face is a perfect forge, his chin being the stithy, his mouth the great bellows, his eyes the ignited charcoal, his nose the fore-hammer, and his brows the broken and smoke begrimmed pent-house that hangs over all."

"Torfefan!" continued Stewart; "Torfefan! that bully of the backsword, rapier, and

dagger, who, except when he is pot-valiant, is always so wise in his steel-devouring courage, as to spread it forth like the tail of a turkey-cock, always the wider, the weaker the adversary he may have to deal with."

"Bravo! bravo!" cried Ramsay, absolutely shouting in his mirth; "Bravo! bravo! and then, last of all, Andrew, that solemn and mysterious knave, who seems as if he would pluck the stars from the skies, as I would the daisies from a flower border, and who, if I mistake not, will yet contrive to weave a good rich garland of fate out of them for himself, whatever he may do for others. To be compelled to keep such company, Stewart, is to pay a severe penalty for the daily converse and favour of a king. But this night, the monarch being engaged, as I told thee, each of these precious fellows hath gone on his own private amusement, for, as thou knowest, there is no such great love among them, as to make any two of them much desire to company together, so, to get rid for one single night of the whole of them but Rogers, whom we must admit to be by far the least offensive and most tolerable

individual among them, is certainly a matter upon which we may very well congratulate ourselves."

"True," replied Sir Walter; "but I see no reason why we should not rid ourselves of Rogers, as well as of the rest, by staying and spending the evening together over this excellent wine. I must confess that I am somewhat travel-worn, and but little inclined for any such entertainment as he may give us."

"Nay, that cannot be," said Ramsay; "I gave my promise to him, ere I knew of thy coming, and when I heard of thine arrival, I pledged my word to bring thee with me. So, now, thou must not abandon me. Besides, as I told thee, the fellow is the best of these minions, and his music, not to mention that of his niece, is always some recompense for the endurance of his company. So haste thee to doff thy travelling weeds, and pink thyself out in such attire, as may make thee pleasing in the eyes of the fair and philomela-voiced Juliet. Be quick! for I shall wait for thee here."

Sir Walter Stewart, rather unwillingly, summoned his servants—was lighted to his chamber,

and soon returned, in a dress, which was in no wise put to shame by that of his friend, and they proceeded together to the lodgings of Sir William Rogers.

The apartments of this favourite minstrel of the king were not extensive, but, as the custom was, down to a very late period of our history, even the principal bed-room, which purposely contained a richly carved aud highly ornamented bed, was thrown open, and all were lighted up with a blaze of lamps. The furniture was gorgeous and gaudy. The serving-men numerous, but not always expert, and the company was small, and chiefly composed of such persons as were likely to be willing to scrape their way up into favour at court, by grasping the skirt, and scrambling after the footsteps, of any one, however worthless, who might be rising there. The entrance of two gallants so distinguished as Ramsay and Sir Walter Stewart produced just such an effect as one might look for from the sudden arrival of two noble peacocks, in full glory of plumage, in the midst of a vulgar flock of turkeys. Each small individual present vainly endea-

voured to hobble-gobble itself into notice, whilst the two greater and grander birds permitted their own agreeable admiration of themselves, to be but little interrupted by the ruffling and noise of the creatures around them. To Sir William Rogers himself, however, court policy induced them to yield a full and respectful attention. He was a good looking, and rather stoutish man, with more of talent than of gentility in his face, for though his brows were heavy, his large eyes were always ready to respond, with powerful expression, to the varied feelings which music never failed to awaken within him. In music he was an enthusiast, but when not under the excitement which it invariably produced in him, his whole features betrayed that dull, sordid, self-complacency, only to be disturbed when his own immediate interest moved him.

The musical knight came forward to receive the two friends, with manifest satisfaction, as persons who raised the tone of his little society, and gave him additional consequence in the eyes of his other guests. He presented Sir Walter, without delay, to his fair niece, who arose grace-

fully from the harp, over which she had just begun to run her fingers in a prelude, and returned his salute with condescending smiles. She was very beautiful; but, although she appeared to be young, her beauty seemed, somehow, to want the freshness of youth. She looked like a gay garment, which, though neither soiled nor worn, had lost somewhat of that glossy newness of surface, with which it first came forth from the tailor's shop. Whilst her regards were turned towards Ramsay, or Sir Walter Stewart, her countenance was covered with the most winning smiles she could wear; but when they chanced to wander round among the meaner personages of the company, it assumed a degree of haughtiness, that was not unmingled with contempt. This proceeded from her very expressive eyes, which beamed forth warm rays, when half veiled by her long dark eyelashes, and were quite in harmony with the mildness of her oval face, her polished forehead, and her dark and finely arched eye-brows. But when their orbs were broadly displayed by the rise of her full eye-lid, the fires that shot from them were too

formidable to be altogether agreeable. As was the fashion with ladies of any distinction in those days, her hair was but little seen—the greater part of it being capped up under a very tall, steeple-looking head-dress, which was of a shape much resembling an overgrown pottle-basket. This was of crimson velvet, ornamented with gold embroidery, and from the taper top of it descended a number of streamers of different colours, which hung down behind, and floated over three-fourths of her person. She wore a rich robe, of the same material and colour as the cap. This was made to fit her tightly, as low as the waist, where it was confined by a richly wrought girdle of gold, from which it flowed loosely down, and swept the ground in a wide train, that covered a large extent of the floor around her, but which was so looped up at the sides, as to display a deep cherry-coloured silk petticoat flowered with gold.

" Better had it been for thee, Juliet, to have sung when I first asked thee," said Sir William Rogers to her; " thy minstrelsy might have passed well enough with our good friends here:

but now, thou must undergo the severe ordeal, of the nicely critical ears, of these our honoured and highly accomplished guests of the court. Sir Walter Stewart here, especially, is well known to be a master of the divine art of music—as, with his gracious favour, you may perchance by and bye hear."

"Alas! uncle, I know too well how silly I have been, in allowing myself to be thus caught, and I feel too surely I am about to be punished for it!" replied the lady, with a sigh, accompanied by a languishing glance at Sir Walter; "for who hath not heard of the exquisite science of Sir Walter Stewart? The fame of his accomplishments have made the proudest gallants of England envious. But his eye hath too much benevolence in it, to leave me to doubt, that he will pity and pardon the faults that may spring from this trembling weakness of hand, and fluttering of heart, which his presence hath so suddenly brought upon me."

The lady, quite accidentally no doubt, then assumed that attitude which was best calculated to display her person to advantage, and began to

run her fingers over the chords, with a boldness and strength of touch, that proved her to be a very perfect mistress indeed of the instrument she handled, since she could thus make it discourse such music, under circumstances which she had herself declared to be so unfavourable. Notwithstanding the overawing presence of Sir Walter Stewart, whose critical powers she had declared she so much dreaded, she commenced a beautiful love-ballad, in a full, firm, and clear voice, with which she very speedily whirled away the musical soul of the Knight of the Aven, who, in spite of his boast to the contrary, was immediately drawn towards her chair, over which he continued to hang during all the time of her performance. Song after song was sung by this siren, in a style so superior to any thing which he had ever heard before, that he was perfectly enraptured. He was called upon to play and to sing in his turn, and the praises which he received, in terms of no very limited measure, from both uncle and niece, and which, if fame does not belie him, were not altogether unmerited, were re-echoed by the whole flock of gobbling

turkeys who pressed around them. The lady then joined her voice to his, in a tender and melting lay,—and thus the evening passed away, till Sir Walter was called upon to hand her to the table, where an ample feast was spread, and where her very agreeable talk was rendered even yet more spirited, by the rich wines, which enlivened the imagination of both speaker and listener. The hours fled most agreeably; and, before Sir Walter took his leave, he readily entered into certain arrangements with the lovely Juliet, by which it was settled that next day was to be the first of a series of meetings, for mutual practice in the art in which both so much delighted, their studies being of course to be carried on under the direction of Sir William Rogers himself.

"Well, Julietta," said the uncle to the niece, after they were left alone, "how likest thou this new instrument, now that thou hast run the fingers of thy fancy over his stops?"

"The instrument is a handsome instrument enough," replied Juliet. "The strings sound melodiously too. But much of mine affection must rest on the gold with which it may be

enriched, and the value of the case which may contain it. Is this Stewart wealthy, I pray thee; and are his possessions ample enough for my desires?"

"I know that thy desires are ample enough," replied Rogers; "but report speaks well of the wealth and possessions of this Sir Walter."

"Some where in the bleak north, are they not?" said Juliet. "By all the saints, the cold and barren sod of this northern clime had hardly ever been pressed by my foot at all, had I not hoped to have mated me with some of its most wealthy nobles!"

"Thou hadst little chance of any such noble match where thou wert, Julietta," replied Rogers; "and, let me tell thee, the fates are quite as much against any such chance for thee here. These proud and dogged Scottish nobles scorn to grace a court, where the King makes so little account of them. And truly there is little wonder that they should thus take offence, seeing that the places in the royal favour, which by inheritance belong to them, should be filled by such beasts as Leonard—Torfefan—Hommil—

Andrew—aye, and that prince of brutes, Cochran, too."

"They are all beasts, as thou sayest, uncle," replied Juliet; "though, if I were obliged to choose among them, I should rather tie myself to that coarse, clumsy elephant whom thou hast last named as king of these brutes, than to any of the others. He is the man, depend on't, who hath the true and proper art to raise the edifice of his own fortunes; and, by using his broad shoulders as a scaffold, a bold woman might thereby mount, methinks, to wealth and honours."

"He is a pestilent, pushing, proud, overbearing, ignorant, vulgar beast, I tell thee," replied her uncle, much excited. "The brute despises music! Depend upon it, he will never rise to any thing but to the garret story of one of his own buildings, from which, if some kind devil would but throw him down, to the dislocation of that accursed bull neck of his, I should cheerfully compose an especial jubilate. Oh, Apollo and Terpsichore! that a man of my musical science and learning, should be compelled

to associate with so vile a piler of stones, and compounder of mortar!"

"I have a shrewd suspicion, that the measure of thy rage against Cochran, is but that of thy fears for his outstripping thee in thine ascent of the lofty tower of ambition," replied Juliet. "But spurn him not, good uncle, if thou art wise; for his ladder is long, and strong; and might, with proper management, be useful to thee."

"I should be right glad to see it so, July, could I but kick down both the ladder and its owner, after I should have so used them," said Rogers. "But methinks thou wouldst fain carry ladder, hod and mortar and all, to the very top of the tower, on thine own shoulders, rather than lose the man they belong to."

"Thou art grievously mistaken, uncle," replied Juliet, keenly. "To rise into a high and wealthy station, and the higher and wealthier the better, would certainly be my desire; but I should much prefer youth, and beauty, and accomplishment, in the instrument which I might use for the gratification of mine ambition. If fate denies me all these indeed, then would I embrace age,

and deformity itself, rather than fail of mine object. Nay, thou canst hardly as yet guess to what means I should resort to secure its completion. As for Cochran, I know he loves me; for, in his great condescension, he hath vouchsafed to tell me so. Nor have I altogether kept the bear aloof. To wed myself to him would be to speculate, and that too with but an ungainly and unloveable subject. But if I could read the book of his fate, and find fortune and honours therein, it would not be the coarse edifice of his body, supported as it is upon such rustic pillars, and crowned by so vulgar and heavy a capital, that would deter me from embracing it. Yet 'tis but a speculation; and, being so, I must confess that I am disposed, rather to grasp at this handsome Corinthian column of the Stewart, than to tie myself to that clumsy Cochran, whose clay image might, after all, crumble to pieces, and suffocate me in its dirty dust."

"I am right glad that thou hast so determined, Juliet," said Rogers. "I have no jealousy of this well-born knight, who hath, moreover, a greater feeling for the divine art of music than any of his cold countrymen with

whom I have yet met, without even excepting Royalty itself. But I might as well see thee built up into a stone wall, as see thee the wife of Cochran! To see thy great musical genius tied to this most unmelodious and croaking chisseler of stones, and compounder of lime, sand, and cow's-hair! I quaver at the very thought! But get thee to bed, my girl. Now that I know my ground-notes, I shall wonder if I work thee not out a piece that shall not only win thee this instrument of thy more recent desires, but enable thee to play upon it too, according as thou wilt, with thine own variations."

Whilst this precious conversation was going on between the uncle and niece, Sir Walter Stewart gave the convoy to Ramsay as far as the Royal Castle-gate, after which he returned towards his hostel. As he was pursuing his solitary way thither, he heard the clashing of swords; and, on moving quickly down the deserted street, he discovered, by the faint light that came from a new moon, two men pressing hard in fence against one, who was defending himself with great courage, with his back to a

wall. Though he had no knowledge of the combatants, he could not stand by and see such foul play.

"For shame! for shame, gentlemen!" cried he. "What! two upon one!"

"Gentlemen, indeed!" cried he that was assailed, in a contemptuous tone, during the moment of breathing afforded him by Sir Walter's interference — "Gentlemen indeed! — Tailors and scaramouches, else am I not the Earl of Huntly!"

"Again dost thou dare so to miscal the gentlemen of the court of his most Royal Majesty of Scotland?" cried one of the individuals, whom Sir Walter immediately discovered to be the pot-valiant Torfefan. "By all the gods of fire, thunder, and battle, thou shalt eat this good bilboa of mine. Have at thee, then, earl, or carl, or devil, if thou likest it!"

"Nay, then, my Lord of Huntly, I will myself relieve thee of this bold bird," cried the knight; "do thou deal with the other."

"Thanks for thy rescue, Sir Walter Stewart," replied Huntly, now recognizing his friend.

The weapon of his noble ally had pierced a fleshy part of his opponent as he turned to run away

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"But thou hast left naught to me but the very shred of the skirt of the garment of this broil—the vile cabbage—the very tailor himself."

"Trust me, thy man, though but the ninth-part of one, is as good as mine," replied Sir Walter.

The combat was now renewed upon fairer terms, and, in a few moments, Torfefan's sword was sent spinning into the air, and, falling from its flight, it rang upon the stones of the causeway, and was shivered into pieces, whilst its owner was prostrated on his back by his over-anxiety to withdraw from the fury of his adversary's onset. Sir Walter's sword-point was immediately at his throat; and, at that very moment the weapon of his noble ally had pierced a fleshy part of his opponent, as he had turned to run away, which act of discretion, however, it did not prevent, for it rather pricked him on to a more active exertion of speed.

"Spare my life, good Sir Walter Stewart!" cried Torfefan, in an agony of fear. "Most noble Knight, spare the life of a fellow-courtier!"

"Get up, sir; I have no intention of taking it," replied Sir Walter. "'Tis enow for me that I have thus exorcised the spirit of the pottle-pot out of thee. 'Twas that which made thine otherwise peaceful sword leap from its scabbard against thy betters. Get thee up, I say, and go home."

"Thou art right, Sir Knight," replied Torfefan, rising humbly upon his knees, and gradually gaining his legs. "I am at all times mild and peaceful, as so brave a man, and so perfect a master of fence ought to be, save when the flask hath somewhat inflamed my brain, and then, indeed, I am as dangerous as a devil. 'Twas well that thou camest, else my Lord of Huntly, whom otherwise I so highly respect, had certainly died by my murderous hand."

"'Twas well, indeed, that thy bloody Bacchanalian rage was staid in time," said Sir Walter Stewart, ironically. "In this bout, thou hast so well proved thy title to bravery, as well as to science in fence, that who shall dare henceforth to deny these thy perfections? So take the advice of a friend, Signor Torfefan, and get

thee straightway to bed, lest the dregs of that same pottle-pot, working in thee still, should draw down upon thee some more serious fracture than that of thy bilboa-blade."

"Ha! true," said Torfefan; "that was a loss indeed! But murderers will suffer at last; and if thou didst but know the blood which that same lethal weapon hath shed in my hands, and the lives which it hath sacrificed, thou would'st say, Sir Knight ——"

"I would say that thou should'st forthwith hasten to thy bed," interrupted Sir Walter. "If the King should hear of this brawl ——"

"Gad so, that's true, Sir Walter!" cried Torfefan; "thank thee for the hint. Were those reptiles, Cochran, Rogers, and the rest, to hear of this, they might work mine absolute destruction. Ah, that's the worst feature of our King's court, Sir Walter! The worst misfortune that has happened, I say, to us gentlemen of the court, is the admission to it of such vile scum as these Cochrans, and Rogers, and Leonards, and such like base mechanics. My very broil this blessed night, may be said to be

owing to my permitting that lily-livered hog in armour, Hommil, to company with me. But while I am prating, these villains may get sight of me, and make their own story out of me. So I'll tarry here no longer. Good night, Sir Walter Stewart; you are a brave gentleman, well fitted to company with the King."

"What a cowardly boasting knave!" said Sir Walter, after he was gone.

"Yet, to such vermin are all the crumbs of royal favour thrown, to the utter starvation of those who are of noble breed!" cried Huntly, with bitterness. "I would fain drink one flask of wine with thee, Stewart, at thy hostel, ere I go home, to wash down the indignation and loathing, which the very sight of these scoundrel caitiffs hath brought into my throat. Let me go thither with thee straightway."

"Willingly, my lord," replied Sir Walter, and, arm and arm together, they proceeded to the hostel.

"Stewart," said the Earl of Huntly, after they were seated at their wine, and leaning across the table to address his friend in a half

whisper, though they were the only guests in the room at that late hour; "thou hast so much of the good will of great and small, that no one grudges thee the favour the king shows to thee; and there are few who have much jealousy of Ramsay either, seeing that he was whipping-boy to James, and, moreover, that he is a gentleman of good descent. But neither lords nor commons, knights nor burgesses, can long tolerate the undue elevation and preferment of wretches, so worthless, as those who block up the royal presence from the approach of better men."

"'Tis unfortunate that it should be so," said Sir Walter; "but has it never occurred to your Lordship, that the nobles of Scotland may have some small share of the blame, by absenting themselves from court as they do, so that the King lacks all opportunity of having their several merits brought under his eye."

"You would not have the high-blooded warsteed to throw himself down in the same stye with obscene swine?" replied the Earl. "I would as soon thrust myself into a den of badgers, as sit down to partake of a king's feast,

with such company as that arrogant mason Cochran, and the other dunghill companions whom James so much delights to honour. The court must be cleared of all such, aye, and swept, and garnished, and perfumed too, before I shall dare to trust my nostrils within its precincts."

"No one can say that such feelings are not quite natural, my lord," replied Sir Walter Stewart; "but yet, I fear that the indulgence of them, can do nothing else but increase the disease which you would so fain cure. 'Tis pity that some few of the nobles do not so far overcome them, as to appear now and then at court. As a soft answer turneth away wrath, so gentle conduct will often effect that which may defy the sternest boldness."

"Nay, but how are we used when we do appear?" demanded the Earl. "Even Albany and Mar are treated as aliens; and if the very royal brothers of the monarch are scarcely noticed, in comparison with those nauseous toads who crawl about the king's footstool, what can we of the humbler peerage expect?"

"There is great reason in what you say, my

lord," observed Sir Walter; "but hush! who comes here?"

A tall thin figure, in black trewse, with a doublet of black, slashed with flame-coloured silk, the body strangely covered with silver stars, and having the signs of the zodiac on the broad belt that confined it, with a black cloak hanging from his shoulders, which had on it the sun and moon and seven stars, and his head shaded by a broad hat, that bore a large plume of feathers, all of the same gloomy hue, stalked into the common room. From the small quantity of illumination which the single lamp, that burned on their table, threw around it, the person that came was but indistinctly visible, in the obscurity that especially prevailed at the lower end of the apartment; but when he came slowly forward within the influence of the light, Sir Walter Stewart, and his friend the Earl of Huntly, recognised the pale, thin, sharp, and prominent features, the cadaverous hue, the dark eyebrows, the piercing eyes, and the long black locks and beard of Andrew the Flemish Astrologer. He came as if in a walking dream; he

stopped within a few feet of the table where they sat—started, as if suddenly returning to the consciousness of the realities around him—darted an inquiring look, first at Lord Huntly, and then at Sir Walter Stewart, and then slowly inclining his head in silent and sombre salutation,. he turned from them, and stalked away, without uttering a syllable.

The Earl, and the Knight, could not for some time shake off the superstitious dread, that involuntarily crept over both of them at the sight of this man, who had thus so strangely and mysteriously visited them. His deep knowledge of the science, to which he pretended, was admitted by all, and his powers were supposed to extend over other regions besides those of the heavens. Their hearts were so chilled by his very aspect, that both felt quite unfitted for renewing their conversation ; and, without making one single remark on this strange intrusion, each drained the full cup that stood before him, and, bidding one another good night, the serving men of the hostel were called, and they separated, to seek their respective places of repose.

A TEMPEST.

CLIFFORD.—What a dreadful tempest out of doors!—Forgive my interruption, Serjeant; but ere you go farther with your interesting story, I think we had better get in some more wood and peats, lest the fire should get hopelessly low, a thing that is very likely to happen where people are so engaged as we are.

GRANT.—The Serjeant's stories might well make one forget every thing else.

CLIFFORD.—Come, Mister Serjeant, whilst the fire is mending, and the Earl and the Knight are retiring to their repose, you may have leisure to wet your whistle a little.

SERJEANT.—I shall not be sorry to do that, sir; my mouth is a little dry to be sure. Keep us all, such a night of wind and rain! How the

blast thuds against the windows!—That is awful indeed! God help the poor man that may be out in such a night! 'Tis well for us to be in bigged land.

GRANT.—As you say, it is well for us to be under a roof, Archy; and yet I wish that the roof of this old house may not be blown away. How furiously the tempest howls along!

AUTHOR.—'Tis fearful to listen to it; yet I suspect that this is nothing to the blasts which its walls must sometimes endure.

SERJEANT.—Ou! bless you, sir! The wind comes down the trough of this glen, at times, enough, one would think, to blow every house and living thing out of it, stones and rocks and all, like peas out of a pop-gun. But this house has stood many a blast, and I hope it will weather out this one yet.

AUTHOR.—It came on very suddenly. It is not half an hour ago since all was quiet, and hear how the wind rages and the rain rattles now.

CLIFFORD.—Our friend Willox must be abroad with his kelpie's bridle.

AUTHOR.—Aye—or Andrew the Flemish Astrologer may have done it.

CLIFFORD.—Andrew the Astrologer! yes, I daresay he was quite equal to kicking up such a rumpus among the elements. I would fain know more of that fellow.

SERJEANT.—Be assured, sir, I shall tell you all I know about him in due course of time. Meanwhile I am ready to take up the clue of my discourse whenever you please.

CLIFFORD.—You may do so when you like, Serjeant; for, as I suppose that this terrible night puts all hope of an early start in the morning out of the question, we may e'en sit up as late as we like.

SERJEANT.—If the rain holds on at this rate, the rivers will all be up, and the mosses swimming, so that our travelling further to-morrow will be impossible.

CLIFFORD.—Come away, then, Serjeant, proceed with your legend, and let the storm roar and rattle as it will.

THE LEGEND OF CHARLEY STEWART TÀILLEAR-CRUBACH CONTINUED.

Sir Walter Stewart was received next day, by King James, with all that kindness which he was used to lavish upon his favourites, among whom the accomplished knight held by no means the lowest place in his estimation. Apartments were immediately allotted to him near the royal person, and his time became almost entirely occupied by his duties as a courtier. He failed not, however, to take all opportunities that occurred, of cultivating his talent for music, under the auspices of Sir William Rogers, and his fascinating niece. Notwithstanding the knight's bold confidence to the contrary, the lady's designs against his heart might have been very rapidly successful, had not the baseness of her motives inclined her to waver from time to time,

between the balance of rival advantages, which were offered to her by an encouragement of Cochran, who had declared himself to be her lover. Thus it was that she often scared Sir Walter Stewart at the very moment when, to all appearance, he seemed most likely unconsciously to gorge the bait, and thus it was that several years glided imperceptibly away, without the lady finding herself one bit nearer to the attainment of either of her objects. Still, however, Sir Walter would ever and anon return within the sphere of her attraction, and the fair Juliet always the more easily managed to conjure him back thither, that they were frequently brought together, to sing and to play in presence of the royal pair, in those little private meetings which were held almost nightly in the Queen's apartment. As for Sir William Rogers, he did all he could to fix his niece's determination towards securing an alliance with Sir Walter Stewart, not only from his unconquerable abhorrence of the unrefined mason, on the one hand, but also from his conviction, that his own ambitious views were fully as likely to be helped forward by the lady's union

with the gallant knight, for whom moreover he had an especial respect, because of his genius and accomplishment in that divine art, to which he was himself so enthusiastically attached.

The royal party was one night assembled, as usual, in the apartment of Queen Margaret, who, seated in a gorgeous chair, richly attired, as became her station, and attended by Ramsay, and some of her maids of honour, and with her angelic countenance lighted up with unfeigned rapture, listened to the mingled voices and minstrelsy of Sir William Rogers, Sir Walter Stewart, and the lovely Juliet Manvers. The King was engaged with Cochran, at a table at one end of the room, in looking over some plans, which had reference to the buildings then going on within the castle. Any one who had witnessed them, whilst so employed, would have said that neither his Majesty, nor his architect, were much occupied in the subject which was the ostensible object of their consideration, for whilst the ears of the monarch seemed ever and anon to draw off his attention to the music, the heavy eyes of Cochran were perpetually wandering towards

the person of the songstress. Ere the music had been long continued, each of them yielded to the irresistible impulse which had moved him, and, whilst the King drew a chair, and seated himself opposite to the performers, Cochran placed himself behind it, and, with that vulgar and unpolished air, which the magnificence of his dress rendered only the more apparent, leaned awkwardly over the back of it, and rivetted his gloating gaze upon the lady's charms. The piece had come to its close, and the royal pair were bestowing their commendations liberally upon those who had executed it, when three loud and solemn taps were heard at the door of the chamber. King James started, and at once assumed an air of intense and serious anxiety, and the Queen, and all present, were more or less disturbed at this interruption.

"I had forgotten!" exclaimed the King, as if speaking to himself alone.—"Enter! thou art at all times welcome!"

The door slowly opened at his word, and the tall thin figure of Andrew the Flemish Astrologer stood in the doorway, habited as he has been

already described, and with a long white rod in his right hand. With his left hand upon his breast, he made a low and solemn reverence to the King, and then pointing his rod over his shoulder, he seemed silently to indicate his desire that his Majesty should follow him.

"Lead on!" cried the King, with an awe-stricken voice and air, whilst he arose from his chair, and hastily put on his hat and cloak. "If we are called by the stars, we are at all times ready to give due obedience to them," and, with these words, he immediately retired with the Astrologer.

Ramsay, Stewart, Rogers, and Juliet Manvers, made their several reverences to the Queen, in which they were clumsily joined by Cochran, and all took their leave. They were no sooner out of the Royal presence, than Cochran, rudely thrusting himself before Ramsay and Sir Walter Stewart, bustled busily up to the lady, as she hung on her uncle's arm, so as to engage the unoccupied place next her, to the exclusion of every one else. Sir Walter was somewhat chafed at this rudeness, and might have for-

gotten himself, had not his rising anger been checked by the voice of one of the Queen's ladies, who called him by his name. The Knight stopped to ascertain what she wanted.

"Sir Walter Stewart," said the lady, "the Queen commands thee to return, for a brief space, to her apartment, that she may again hear thee sing that French ballad of thine own composition, which so much pleased her Majesty two nights ago. Her Majesty would fain have the words, and catch the notes of it."

"I humbly obey her Majesty's command," replied the Knight, returning with the lady immediately.

On entering the Queen's apartment, he made his reverence to her Majesty; and she, having again signified her wishes to him in a very gracious manner, she motioned him to take up a lute, and seat himself on a stool near her chair; and after having done as she desired, he began to sing the ballad she had named, and to accompany himself on the instrument.

In the meanwhile the King followed the solemn, step and apparition-like figure of the Astrologer

till he brought his Majesty to an angular part of the castle-wall that, skirting the giddy precipice of lofty rock on which the fortress stands, looked out over the country to the south and west. But that which was an extensive and magnificent prospect by day, was at this moment shrouded in the shades of night. There he took his stand, and pointed upwards with his rod. The moon was in its second quarter, and shed a pale and partial light. A strange and portentous arch of black and very opaque clouds, rested its extremities on the verges of the northern and southern horizon, and spanned the heavens through the zenith. Behind this, all to the eastward, was one dark vault, impenetrable to the eye, whilst the western edge of the arch was tinged with bright rain-bow hues, and the whole sky below it, upon that side, was serene and cloudless. As the king gazed upwards in wonder, not unmingled with dread, a bright flash of lightning suddenly illumined the whole of the black and solid concave of clouds behind them, and the walls of the castle were shaken by a tremendous peal of thunder. The heart of the royal James

quailed within him. The peal was reverberated from the bold front of Dumyot, with a harsh and crashing sound, and then, after visiting and rousing up every echo among the Ochills, it rolled fearfully away up the valley of the Forth, until it died amid the distant western mountains. Filled with superstitious dread, the King grasped the left arm of the Astrologer, who stood unmoved, with his rod extended in his right hand.

"Holy Virgin Mother, Messire Andrew! what do these dread signs portend?" cried James, with deep anxiety of voice and manner.

"These!" exclaimed Andrew, in French, and in a wild and enthusiastic tone, that would have sounded as contemptuous in the King's ear, but for the intensity of his desire to have his fears and doubts put to rest; "these are but the mere auxiliaries of Heaven's appalling oratory. See!—Know you not yonder stars which now approach each other to a conjunction so threatening?"

"Mars and Venus approaching to strange and fearful conjunction indeed," replied the King, shuddering. What can it bode?"

"And see ye not that they are in the ascendant, whilst Jupiter is sinking fast?—Now, they are almost in contact—and now!"

"Heaven in its mercy defend us, what a dreadful peal!" cried the King, as the thunder again burst terribly over his head. "And see, the thick and inky veil begins to rend asunder into separate clouds, like some vast army breaking its general mass into its several legions. And behold now, how they divide and subdivide, careering swiftly like squadrons of horsemen over the vault of the heavens. And now, look how strangely and capriciously the broken-up clouds have here veiled, and there revealed, the different portions of the sky!"

"Aye!" said the Astrologer, solemnly, "and now the mystic dance is done. Each several fragment of vapour hath taken his place. The characters are fixed; and now 'tis man's fault if he read not enough of Heaven's will in so wide-spread and so plainly written a book. There we can see the Hydra, and there the Greyhounds —there the greater, and there the lesser Dog.

But where is the Lion? And where the Northern Crown?"

"Alas, Messire Andrew! thou lookest as if thou wer't dismayed by these fearful prodigies," exclaimed the King again, with an anxiously inquiring eye. "What is it that you dread they may portend?"

"It is grievous for me to translate to your Majesty the meaning of these direfully ominous portents," replied Andrew, gravely, after a long pause, during which he seemed gradually to call down his spirit from the heavens, where it had been soaring for sometime amid all the wonders they displayed. "Yet is it better for you to know their fearful warnings, so far as mortals may interpret them," continued he, rising into a wild kind of inspiration. "Danger is threatened to the King!—to the King of Scotland! Beware of the princes and lords of the land! Those in whom thou takest the most pleasure may prove thy greatest bane! Commotions and wars are to be looked for and dreaded! Beware! beware! Oh, King! lest the Scottish Lion be devoured by its whelps!"

"The Scottish Lion devoured by its whelps!" re-echoed the King, in the muttered voice of dismay. "Danger from the princes and nobles of the land! Danger from those in whom we take most pleasure! What doth all this import? And in especial, what meaneth this last strange enigma?—What!—the Queen!—Speak Messire Andrew? Or would it point at those who most enjoy my favour?—Why dost thou not answer me?—Wars and commotions—the powerful influence of Mars is plain—but that of Venus!—say!—speak! Surely, surely that doth not touch the loyalty of our Queen?"

"The moment of divination has passed away for this night," said the cunning Astrologer, in a low hollow voice, like that produced from an over-exhausted spirit. "I am now weak and blind as other men. Yet said I nothing of her most gracious Majesty Queen Margaret, whom God long preserve! The planet your Majesty speaks of hath two several and distinct influences—one, the which may operate as touching things more immediately under the dominion of woman's passion, and the other, as denoting a

mere point of time. This latter interpretation would seem to me, at this moment, to be by far the more likely, for, as Mars would predict battles, his conjunction with the Star of Evening would rather appear to me to mark that they will arise in the evening of your Majesty's reign, which may God and St. Andrew render long and prosperous !"

"Nay, but cans't thou not yet inquire more closely, Messire Andrew?" demanded the King, impatiently. "These doubts are worse than ignorance."

"Another time we may find fit opportunity to solve them, good my liege," replied the Astrologer, with a low reverence. "The spirit of divination hath passed from me, and I am now no more than a weak and blind mortal. And see! even the heavens have refused to yield up farther knowledge of future events to the sons of earth, for they have wrapped themselves up in one dark and impenetrable veil of cloud. To-night the book of fate is shut !—Saw ye that! The elements themselves forbid all farther question."

As he spoke, a terrible glare of lightning

blazed around them, momentarily illuminating every feature of the grand scenery by which they were surrounded. A fearful clap of thunder again burst over their heads with awful magnificence, and rolled terribly away. A furious wind began to blow, and large drops of rain descended, a tempest was approaching, and the King, sunk, disheartened, and unsatisfied, was driven in by the natural results of those threatenings in the sky, which he had been so attentively watching, to brood upon those fanciful horrors and dangers with which they, in reality, had no connection. He returned towards the Queen's apartment in deep thought, and he had entered it fully, before the notes of the music that still sounded in it had power to rouse him from his abstraction. Sir Walter Stewart still sat near the Queen's footstool, singing to the accompaniment of his lute, and her Majesty and her maids of honour were still eagerly occupied in listening.

"Ha!" cried King James, as he recovered perfect consciousness of the scene before him, and speaking with a highly disturbed air and

tone; "Methought our privacy had been relieved from all further interruption for this night?"

"Pardon, my liege!—my love!" cried the Queen, rising from her chair, and affectionately taking his arm. "Pardon, if we have done aught to displeasure thee! I and my maidens had a mind to hear again that sweet ballad of Sir Walter Stewart's making, which he sang so pleasantly to us the other night, as you may remember. He was brought back, therefore, in obedience to my command, and if there be aught of blame in this, it is all mine own. That he hath staid so long after he did return, if fault in that there be, it must be charged against his own pleasing minstrelsy, which did so enchain the ears of his hearers, that time passed by unheeded."

"Permit me, your Majesty, to take my leave," said Sir Walter, making his wonted obeisance to the King as he retired.

"Good night," said the King, with more of condescension, but with less of warmth than he

was accustomed to use towards one whom he so much favoured.

All that night the royal mind was vexed by frightful waking visions, that haunted it to the exclusion of sleep. In vain did his Majesty try to embody them into any thing like a clear and connected picture of coming events. But dark though the ground was upon which he worked, certain prominent lights continually started from it, and remained stationary before him, so as ultimately to fix themselves in some degree upon him as probable truths. The most stimulating of these might be guessed at, from the royal orders which were issued on the following morning. The Court was hastily and unexpectedly removed to Edinburgh Castle; and soon afterwards, the two Princes of the blood-royal, the Duke of Albany, and the Earl of Mar, were, to the astonishment of all men, seized and made prisoners. Mar was confined in Craigmillar Castle. But of Albany, the King seemed anxious to take especial care, for he was committed to custody in Edinburgh Castle itself, where he

might be more particularly guarded under the royal eye.

Yet all this did not seem to have relieved James' mind from the terrors which had taken possession of it. The approach of the nobles to the royal person was less encouraged than it had ever been. The King's favourites, though still permitted to have their usual intercourse with him, were all in their turns looked upon at times with an eye of doubt. Sir Walter Stewart sensibly felt, that he was subjected to a greater portion of the effects of this suspicious temper than any of the others. An excuse had been found for his being deprived of such apartments in the Castle of Edinburgh, as he had had in that of Stirling, and he was obliged to hire lodgings within the walls of the city. His presence at the private parties in the Queen's apartment was rarely, if ever, required. The musical meetings there were of themselves less frequent, and when they did take place, he was not among the number of the performers. To make amends for this, he spent more of his time in the pursuit of his favourite science, with the fair Juliet Manvers,

in the apartments of Sir William Rogers, and as the lady seemed to be making, day after day, greater inroads upon his heart, so did Sir Walter Stewart himself rise every day more and more in the estimation of the musical knight. With such a source of amusement, Sir Walter was less affected by the coldness which he experienced at court, than might have been naturally supposed. But he felt deeply for the confinement of the Princes, with whom he had been admitted into habits of intimacy that bordered upon the warmth of friendship. Yet, much as he was personally attached to them, and anxiously as he would have wished to have befriended them, he knew enough to convince him that he could make no effort in their behalf, that would not have a certain tendency to lead to some fatal issue, both as regarded them and himself. But the death of the Earl of Mar, which happened soon afterwards, and which was most suspiciously given out as having taken place suddenly, by apoplexy, in a warm bath, so roused his feelings, that he resolved to take the first opportunity of making some attempt to save Albany, and to this he

was more immediately stimulated by something that occurred to him one night, as he was walking and ruminating on the Castle-hill.

" Sir Walter Stewart," said a man, who stood muffled up in a cloak, to him, as he was striding slowly past, unconscious that there was any one near him, " wilt thou not halt for a moment to speak to an old friend ?"

" My Lord Huntly !" cried Sir Walter, in astonishment, after approaching the figure, and ascertaining who it was that spoke.

" Hush !—Name me not so loudly !" replied Huntly. " The very air hath ears, yea, and eyes too. I am here in secret and in disguise. Were I discovered, my life might pay for it. Come farther this way into the shadow. I would speak with thee about matters which no one else must hear, and my time is short. We must save Albany !"

" Most willingly would I aid in doing so," replied Sir Walter. " But how is his safety to be secured ?"

" Thou canst be eminently useful," replied Huntly.

"I know thy zeal in a friend's behalf, and although thou mightest have shown some unwillingness to take part with us, when our grievances amounted to nothing more than royal neglect, yet perhaps thou mayest now be more sharpened to our purpose, when thou seest that the murderous knife hath already been drawn upon us, that the first victim hath been already sacrificed, and that victim too a high and noble prince of the blood royal, who was, moreover, thy friend."

"Nay, surely thou dost not believe that my Lord Mar died other than a natural death?" said Sir Walter.

"A natural death!" exclaimed Huntly.—"Aye, a death naturally occurring from a weak and cruel brother's jealousy. That species of natural death, to wit, which the sheep may very naturally receive from the hand of the butcher!"

"Why, they say he died in a bath;" said Sir Walter.

"And in so saying they say truly," replied Huntly. "Of a truth he died in a bath—a hot bath, into which he was kindly put to recover

him from a deep cut in the main artery of his arm, given him by one of the royal executioners."

"'Tis horrible, if true!" said Sir Walter, shuddering.

"'Tis as true as it is horrible," continued Huntly. "And now methinks I may trust to your being less scrupulous in listening to the grievances of the lords, than thou wert when I last touched the topic with thee at Stirling."

"My Lord," replied Sir Walter, "I will honestly tell thee, that to save Albany, a man whom I honour as a royal prince and a highly accomplished knight, and whom, moreover, I hold in deep affection as a friend, I am willing to put mine own life to utmost peril, and this the more too, that if I can save him I shall think that my so doing will be the preserving of the right arm of Scotland. But in any thing that may touch my fealty directly to the person of King James, I must be held excused, seeing that I have already received too much kindness from his Majesty, to permit me to prove in anywise a rebel to him,—but in this matter of the Duke of Albany, my judgment tells me that I shall, by

saving him, be doing good service to my king as well as to my country."

"Then let us leave all else at present, and talk of this matter in hand," said Huntly. "Thou art well versed in the customs and affairs of France, and canst speak its tongue. Couldst thou not contrive to discover, whether some barque may not be soon looked for from thence with merchandize?"

"So far, my Lord, I can answer thee here upon the spot," replied Sir Walter. "It so chances that I look daily for the arrival of a captain, well known to me, who trades in wine. He is the bearer of certain casks for me, and I can therefore go to inquire regarding him without much suspicion. It shall be done to-morrow."

"This is most lucky," said Huntly. "So now let us consider well as to our plans. Knowest thou how the Duke is guarded?"

"I do not lodge within the castle," replied Sir Walter. "Nor am I so often within its walls as I wont to be. But this I know, that the Duke is guarded most strictly. The captain of the guard himself keeps the key of the apartment

where he is imprisoned, and where, to make all things secure, his chamberlain is locked up with him, and no one is allowed to go in or out who is not in the first place most narrowly examined. But yet will I scrupulously observe, and make myself master of the whole circumstances, and of the exact position of things, and it will go hard with me if I cannot find some way of baffling their vigilance."

"Then let us part to-night, lest we be observed," said Huntly. "That accursed astrologer, Flemish Andrew, may again start up before us, like the devil in our path."

"Um," replied Sir Walter, doubtingly; "thou mayest not be very far from the truth in thy evil suspicions of him, my Lord. I liked not his last visit."

"Well, no matter," said the Earl; "to-morrow night we may meet again."

"Aye, to-morrow night—here, and at the same hour," replied Sir Walter. "But if I come not, my Lord, I would have thee believe, that if not unwillingly detained by the King, I may

perhaps be employing myself more usefully elsewhere."

"I shall so believe," replied Huntly; "then farewell till our next meeting, be that when it may."

The friends then parted, and took different ways, to avoid all chance of being seen together, and Sir Walter Stewart was about to enter the head of the close where his lodging was situated, when he was accosted by a person who came limping up to him, with all the appearance of a jaded foot traveller, and who addressed him in humble, but by no means clownish, salutation.

"Sir Knight," said he, "wilt thou vouchsafe to pardon me, a stranger, and deign to tell me whether thou canst direct me to the lodging of Sir Walter Stewart of Stradawn?"

"Surely I have heard that voice before," said the knight, without replying to the question.

"Sir Walter!—My father!" exclaimed the other in great surprise.

"What!" exclaimed Sir Walter, in no less astonishment, and in any thing but a gracious

tone, "Charley Stewart! In the name of all that is wonderful what hath brought thee to Edinburgh?—This is not well. Methought I had arranged all things to thy heart's content, for thy proper employment in thine own native district. But I forget how time flies. Doubtless ere this thou art as learned in thine art, and in the use of the goose, needles, shears, and bodkin, as the great and accomplished Mr. Jonathan Junkins himself."

"I crave your pardon, Sir Knight," replied Charley. "Ill as the spirit of the Stewart that is within me might brook such mean drudgery, I struggled hard to break it into the destiny which thou hadst been pleased to assign me. But the rude caitiff churls that worked in Junkins' shop, and some of the boorish neighbours too, presuming on my youth, fastened on me the offensive nickname of *Tàillear-crubach*, or the lame tailor. This I could not bear; and after having well pummelled some dozen or so of them, one after the other, I deemed it as well to secure peace for the future, by giving up all just claim to so ignominious a title."

"By saint Michael, my boy," cried Sir Walter, cordially taking Charley's hand; "I cannot say but thou didst well. What a strapping burly chield thou hast grown! But what hast thou been doing with thyself then, since thou gavest up tailoring?"

"I have learned to ride, and to use a sword and a lance indifferent well," said Charley.

"Bravo!" cried Sir Walter. "By the Rood, thou art mine own very flesh and blood! Trust me, had I guessed that thou wert made of such metal, I should never have thought of tying thee to a tailor's board, I promise thee. Would I had known this sooner! But now!—How fares it with thy mother, boy?"

"Well, Sir Walter," replied Charley with a deep sigh. "She was well when I last saw her."

"Would that I had sooner known thy merits, Charley!" said Sir Walter, with a depth of feeling which he had not yet displayed. "I might then have ——But now I fear I am too far involved with another——The fates have been cruelly against thee, boy."

"They have indeed!" said Charley, with an emotion which almost choked him.

"Well! well!" said Sir Walter, affectionately squeezing his hand. "Come—cheer up, Charley! I may yet have it in my power to do something for thee.—And by Saint Andrew," continued the knight, after a short pause, "now I think on 't, thou hast come to me in the very nick of time. Thine aid will be most useful to me. But this is neither the time nor the place to talk about such matters. Come, let us to my lodging, that I may procure you refreshment and rest; for your pale face, hollow eyes, and clinging cheeks, would seem to say that thou greatly lackest both; and as thou mayest require to be up betimes, I shall delay farther questioning of thee till a fitter opportunity."

But as you will hardly wish to wait, gentlemen, until Charley Stewart has had such necessary restoration of exhausted nature, as shall enable him to tell his own story, I shall hastily sketch, at somewhat greater length than he had time to do, what took place with him during those years that have elapsed since we

last heard of him. A few months had sufficed to sicken him, as we have seen, of the shop-board of Mister Jonathan Junkins. For a time he lived quietly with his mother, soothing her sorrow with all the tenderness of the kindest of hearts, following out his learning under the kind instruction of the then priest of Dounan, who had taken an especial favour for him; and, lastly, occupying himself in the delightful task of communicating to Rosa MacDermot, that knowledge which he thus gained. Now and then, to be sure, spite of his lameness, he took pleasure in exercising himself in athletic feats; and in this practice, he was much aided by an accidental acquaintance, which he chanced to make with a certain Sir Piers Gordon, a small landholder in a neighbouring glen, who, himself a dependant of the Earl of Huntly, was glad to collect a few retainers about him, in any way, to help him to uphold his dignity. Under the auspices of this well-trained soldier, Charley became an expert handler of the claymore, a fearless horseman, and no very contemptible wielder of a lance; and he had more than once

had the satisfaction, of making one of the party who accompanied his patron, in some of those skirmishes or minor movements of warfare between clans, which the wild and unsettled state of the country rendered much too common in those days to be always particularized, far less to be chronicled.

Charley was one day seated, with Rosa MacDermot, on their favourite flowery bank, by the side of the same spring I formerly described as gushing from below a mossy stone, under the grove of weeping birches, where we last heard of them together. But Rosa was now grown almost a woman, being tall of her age, and of very handsome person; and the scar of the crossmark on her cheek had now become so slight, that so far from being a deformity, it rather gave an interesting expression to her otherwise blooming and richly beautiful countenance. Her love for Charley, and his for her, had grown with every day they had lived. But maiden modesty on her part, and delicacy on his, had made both of them somewhat more reserved, and more guarded in giving way to the

expression of it. She no longer talked of being his wifey; and when he, hurried on by the feelings of the moment, was led to allude to their future union, when future prospects should smile more kindly upon them, her words, though tender, were few, whilst her eyes and her blushes spoke volumes.

They were intently engaged in converse together, when they were interrupted by a most unseemly looking object that appeared before them. If they had never beheld it until that moment, they might have had doubts as to which of the sexes it belonged to. The face was hideous, the nose being very prominent and hooked, so as to project over the mouth, which was hardly perceptible. The eyes, when open, were great, round, and fiery, and they were covered by eyelids of an unnatural largeness, so that the strange and regular alternation of the muscular motion, which was exerted in the dropping and raising of them, produced the most fearful effect. Enveloped as the head was in an old soiled red tartan plaid, which was twisted around it, and fell in large folds over

half the person, after being knotted behind over the back, the whole body had a bunchy bird-like appearance, which was rendered still more uncouth, by its being supported on the bare, wirey, dirt-begrimmed shanks, and claw-like talons, which sprawled out beneath a short grey petticoat. The real name of this strange, unearthly looking monster, was lost in her antiquity. She had appeared in that district many years before, no one knew from whence; and as all her marks were then the same as I have described them now, it is not wonderful that she should have acquired, from the rude people, the name of *the Howlet*, from her extreme likeness to that ill-omened bird. And tired as she had long been of kicking against the scorn of the world, and callous as she had been rendered under all the miseries it had heaped upon her, she now answered to that appellation, with the same readiness which she might probably have shown in the more sunny days of her youth, when she cheerfully replied to her own proper name, and to the fond endearments of a father and a mother. Yet, let it not be imagined that

she, miserably abandoned as she had so long been to all that was wretched in human existence, had not her moments of reflection on happier days, long since gone by, the recollection of which only the more embittered the present. Nor is it to be supposed that, much as she had suffered, she herself had been bereft of all the better feelings of humanity. Her external appearance was enough to endow her, in the estimation of the vulgar, with all the attributes of malignity, as well as with the dread powers of sorcery. But although her approach never failed to produce a certain sensation of awe in the gentle mind of Rosa MacDermot, it was always mingled with a very large share of pity for the poor creature's penury and distress; and this was fully participated by the good hearted Charley Stewart.

"Poor Howley!" cried Rosa, the moment she beheld her; "it is long since I have seen thee. Where hast thou been wandering during this many a day?"

"Some food for charity's sake!" said the Howlet, in that half shooting, half whistling

tone of voice, which strangely carried out her otherwise remarkable similarity to the bird she was called after. "I am starving! I am famished!—Some food for charity's sake!"

"Poor Howley, thou shalt never want it whilst I can help thee to it!" said the compassionate girl.

"Though hard-heartedness and scorn may meet me at every other door in this weary and wicked world," said the Howlet, "I still find charity here."

"Sit down then on the bank there," said Rosa, "and I will run and bring thee food in a moment."

"God's blessing be upon thee, fair maiden!" said the Howlet, with deep feeling.

"Thou canst bless, then!" said Charley Stewart gravely, after Rosa was gone.

"I can pray to God to bless!" replied the Howlet; "and, unlike the men of this world, a God of all goodness will not refuse to listen to such a prayer, because it comes from the heart of a poor outcast, the scorn of this heartless world, clothed in rags, and starving for food.

And who should I pray for, if I did not pray for blessings on that angel?"

"She is an angel, Howley!" cried Charley, with ecstacy—"an angel in soul as well as in form. See how she comes tripping with her basket and pitcher, as if she hardly trod the earth!"

The old woman fastened her long hands greedily on the viands, the moment they came within her reach, her eyes glaring wide, and shutting alternately, and her ravenous hunger urged her to devour her food so fast, that it was fearful to behold her; and then, as she did so, she went on muttering in her whistling voice, "The holy Virgin bless thee, my fair maiden!—Och! och! what pain it is to swallow. Three days have I been denied food by my flinty-hearted fellow creatures! yet may God, in his mercy, forgive them!—Three days! three whole days! The blessing of Heaven, its best blessings on thee, thou angel!—Och, such pain! Thou shalt be a landed lady yet! Och, och! Thou shalt marry a man with a knight's spur

The old woman fastened her long hands greedily on the viands

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at his heel! Och! such a pang at my heart! Och! oh!"—

Rosa and Charley Stewart, who had both been swallowing her words, with as much avidity as she had been devouring the food that had been given her, now both started up in dire alarm, and ran towards the old woman. Her eyes rolled dreadfully for a moment, and then they became fixed; the basket she held dropped from her hands; her arms and limbs stretched themselves out in rigid convulsion; her head fell stifly back on the bank, and, when they essayed to raise it up, they found that she was dead.

It was many a long day before Rosa MacDermot could shake off the horrible impression which this scene had made upon her young mind, so far as to be able to recal it with anything approaching to tranquillity. Charley, however, had often pondered deeply on the words which had fallen from the old woman, and he was impatient till the time did come, when he felt that he might venture to allude to them.

"Charley," said Rosa anxiously, and tenderly taking his hand, as they were one day sitting

together on their favourite spot; "something grieves thee in secret. Thou wert not wont to conceal a thought from me; why shouldst thou do so now? Why shouldst thou deny me my share of that sadness, which, being thine, ought to belong to both of us?"

"Rosa," replied Charley, fervently returning her gentle pressure; "I will honestly confess my folly. Those idle words of the poor Howlet have clung to my soul with a heaviness which I cannot shake off."

"Idle words they were, indeed," replied Rosa; "words idly uttered by the poor crazy creature in the delirium of starvation. But, idle or not, they boded no evil to me; and is it by Charley Stewart that they are to be grudged to me?"

"Think of their import, Rosa," replied Charley, gravely; "and then you will see that I can scarcely be expected calmly to contemplate them."

"What!" exclaimed Rosa, smiling—"that I am to be a landed lady? Is that a matter that should give thee pain to think of?"

"Reflect, Rosa, by what means it was said

that thou art to become so," replied Charley, with a sigh. "By marrying a man with a knight's spurs at his heels! Ran not the old woman's words so? And canst thou believe that I can coolly contemplate the probable accomplishment of any such prophecy?"

"Charley!" cried Rosa, with great feeling, whilst tears swelled from under her beautiful eyelids, "canst thou believe it possible that I should ever forget all I owe to thee? Canst thou believe that I can forget my often repeated vows? Canst thou believe that those infant affections which have grown up with me, strengthening as they grew, until they have now ripened with me in womanhood, can ever perish but with my life? My life is thine, for to thee I owe it. My soul is thine, for to thee I am indebted for that culture and expansion which may best fit it for heaven. My heart is thine, for it is to thee that I have been indebted for stocking it with its best and purest sympathies. Canst thou then doubt that I ever could be any other's than thine?"

"May the Virgin ever bless thee for thy

words, my love!" cried Charley, with ecstasy. "I am satisfied of the truth of thine affection. Yet had I been better pleased if that old woman had never given utterance to those idle dreams of hers. At such a time too!—So awful!—Just before her vexed and worn out spirit took its flight from its wretched earthly tenement!"

"It was awful, indeed!" said Rosa, solemnly. "But methinks," added she, after a pause, and in a more cheerful tone—"Methinks the poor Howlet's words might bear a more pleasing interpretation than thou wouldst seem inclined to put upon them; yea, and to my fancy, much more natural withal."

"As how?" demanded Charley, eagerly.

"Marry, that thou mayest be the man with the knight's spurs at his heels," said Rosa, dropping her voice and her eyes, and blushing deeply.

"What!" exclaimed Charley, energetically. "By all the saints in the kalendar, but that were an interpretation indeed! I thank thee, Rosa, for thy augury. Trust me, if it lacks accomplishment, in due time, it shall not be my

fault. Though I have been turned over into the dirt, by him to whom I should have looked for countenance and support, to encourage me in a nobler career—by him to whom I reasonably looked for the education befitting a soldier,—thanks to mine honest patron, Sir Piers, I am not now altogether in want of it. Thanks, moreover, be to God, that I have never done anything which may, with reason, make my father ashamed of me. And, with the blessing of Saint Andrew on this arm of mine, I may yet live to earn those honours, which his indifference towards me would have denied me."

Rosa did not altogether enjoy perfect ease of mind after Charley Stewart had left her. She thought, with some pride to be sure, of the nobleness of that spirit which she had thus seen blaze up within him. But she felt that she had now the dread responsibility of having thus roused it; and all a woman's fears for the consequences were awakened in her bosom. Nor was the happiness of the days that followed increased by this accidental conversation. For now, she rarely or ever saw him, in whose

society her whole life had hitherto glided on with so much felicity. Alice Asher too, had her complaints to make of her son's frequent and long absence from her; and the only consolation the maiden had, was in frequently visiting the mother of Charley Stewart—to talk over his merits—a theme of which neither of them were very likely to tire—and to sigh for his presence.

Meanwhile Charley was almost constant in his attendance upon Sir Piers Gordon; and he very soon distinguished himself so much in all the accomplishments of a soldier, that he became the most cherished and favoured of the old soldier's followers. But this was not all; for, unknown to himself, and altogether without any effort on his part, he found especial favour in the sight of Marcella Gordon, niece, and acknowledged heiress of his patron, Sir Piers. This was a lady, by no means uncomely, though of most uncommonly masculine manners and mind, who, at any time, would have much preferred to witness a fray, or even to take her share in it, than to sit down to a feast, or to

mix in a dance or a masking party. She became smitten with Charley Stewart for his martial acquirements, bold bearing in his saddle, and hardihood at all times; and for all these he well merited her admiration.

Sir Piers Gordon and his party were one day returning from an expedition, which had been suddenly undertaken in pursuit of some Catteranes, whom, as being public marauders, and general enemies to all, he had, without scruple, followed across the territories of the Stewart of Stradawn. He passed at no great distance from the humble dwelling of Mrs. MacDermot.

"So please thee, Sir Knight," said Charley Stewart to Sir Piers, "I will turn aside a brief space to yonder cottage, to say a few words to an old friend, whom I have not seen for many a day; and I will join thee again ere thou hast ridden a long mile."

"I care not if I go with thee, Charley," said Sir Piers; "that is, if thy friend's house can furnish me with a draught of any thing better than water, for my throat is parched like a mountain corry in the dog-days."

" Such as that humble roof may afford, I think I may venture to promise thee," replied Charley, somewhat disappointed at being so attended.

" I shall go with thee too," said Marcella Gordon, who, on this occasion, had followed her uncle in his expedition.

The men-at-arms having been halted by the road-side, Charley led the way to the widow's cottage. As he rode forth from among the trees of the birch-grove, that flanked one side of the house, and partly shaded half its front, Rosa's quick eyes caught his figure—her heart bounded with joy, and in a moment she was at the door, and, from the first irresistible impulse of her heart, she almost sprang into his arms; but immediately perceiving that her lover was not alone, she blushed, and hastily retreated within doors.

" Is that your sister, young man ?" demanded the Lady Marcella.

" No, lady," replied Charley, in some confusion; " but she is a very old friend of mine."

" A very young friend of thine, methinks !" said Sir Piers. " She is very beautiful."

Mrs. MacDermot now appeared, and ushered the strangers into the house with well-blended humility and kindness, and proceeded to do the little hospitalities of her unpretending roof. Charley was himself abashed and baulked; but yet he conversed with Rosa, though in that chastened manner that more than any thing else betrays the consciousness of lovers, in the eyes of those who may be observing them. No eyes were more penetrating than those of Marcella Gordon. They shot basilisks at the pair. The visit was necessarily short, and the parting between Rosa and Charley was doubly severe to both, since they were thus compelled by the presence of others, to conceal their emotions.

"By all the saints, but thou art a happy fellow, Stewart!" said Sir Piers Gordon to Charley, as they turned away to join the party. "That is the prettiest young creature I have seen for many a long day."

"I see little to admire about her," said the Lady Marcella, with a scornful air; "a waxen child! a smock-faced red and white pippin!"

"Nay, Marcella, women are no judges of

beauty in their own sex," replied Sir Piers. "I say she is very lovely; and I say again thou art a happy fellow, Stewart; for, judging from appearances, thou seem'st to be right well established in her affections."

"We have known one another since her childhood," said Charley Stewart hurriedly.

"And so now thou wouldst fain convert her from thy playmate into thy wife," said Sir Piers, laughing.

"My wife, Sir Piers!" said Charley, in great confusion. "What could I do with a wife, who am so poor and unknown? I must e'en follow Fortune for some time as my mistress, and court her till she smiles upon me."

"Fear not that she will refuse to smile upon one of thy merit," said the Lady Marcella. "One who can ride, and wield his weapons as thou canst, may well look to Fortune providing something better for him than the obscure and low-bred orphan of a common man-at-arms."

Charley Stewart was silent, but Sir Piers was not altogether so blind as not to perceive how matters stood with his niece. He had observed

the Lady Marcella's manner,—was struck with her words,—and a strong conviction entered his mind that she had allowed herself to fall in love with Charley Stewart. Now his affection for Charley had waxed so strong, that, knowing the good blood that was in him, he would have rejoiced to have seen him the husband of Marcella. But feeling that it would be prudent, before giving encouragement to any such scheme, that he should privately satisfy himself as to the suspicions he entertained of an existing attachment between Charley and Rosa MacDermot, and, having failed in one attempt to lead Charley to be explicit, he privately resolved in his own mind, secretly to visit Mrs. MacDermot herself, from whom he looked to receive clearer and more ready information.

Having accordingly ridden over to her house alone, the very next morning, he soon learned from the worthy woman the whole history of the lovers. He was not a little disappointed to find that he had made so shrewd a guess, and that, to so honest and honourable a mind as his, there thus remained no fair hope of the completion of

that alliance, which would have been so agreeable to him, as well as to his niece. All that he had learned from the widow regarding Charley, had only served to increase his admiration of him, and to make his regret the greater. But being now in possession of the fact, he thought it his duty to deal plainly with the Lady Marcella, and he accordingly embraced the very first opportunity he could command of speaking with her in private.

"Marcella," said he to her abruptly, "what think ye of Charley Stewart?"

"A proper young man, I promise thee," replied the lady, with the same want of ceremony.

"His lameness is unfortunate,—it mars his appearance much," said Sir Piers. "And that cross scar on his cheek is any thing but ornamental."

"Pshaw!" cried the lady; "a fico for his scar! I hope, ere he dies, to see his manly face seamed by many a deeper ornament of the same sort, gained in tough fight, man to man. And as to his lameness! shew me one that will vault

into his saddle with him, or ride with him, or hold a lance with him after he is in it! Charley Stewart is a prince of a fellow!"

"All that is very true, niece," said Sir Piers; "but methinks thou speakest of him with unusual warmth. Pray Heaven thou be'st not in love with the young man!"

"Nay, uncle, since I must needs say so, that is already past praying for," replied Marcella, with a sigh; which, as it was the first that ever in her life escaped her, was a precious deep one.

"I am sorry to hear thee say so, niece," said Sir Piers; "for thy case is hopeless, seeing that thou hast already a rival, to whom he is not only attached, but affianced."

"What, uncle!" exclaimed the lady, in a supercilious tone; "dost thou think so very meanly of thy niece, as to suppose that the whey-faced orphan of a miserable man-at-arms, can have any chance with me, when I, the heiress of thy lands, choose to enter the lists?"

"I think and hope too well of my niece and heiress," said Sir Piers gravely, "to believe, that, for her own gratification, she will try to divide

two hearts already united by the tenderest vows that affection can form."

"Affection!" exclaimed the lady; "tush, nonsense, uncle! the affection of children! the brotherly and sisterly affection of babes, for such was the sort of affection of which Stewart himself spoke, and his words are all we have yet to go upon."

"Pardon me," said her uncle, calmly; "I have yet better information than any thing we have gathered from him. Suspecting that Charley Stewart's merits were beginning to render him not altogether without interest in your eyes, I deemed it to be my duty to know the truth regarding this attachment between him and Rosa MacDermot. With this view I visited the Widow MacDermot herself, and from her I learned, that the bond between the pair, lacks nothing to complete it, but the holy sacrament that may fasten the tie for ever."

"And until that tie be fixed, it is nothing," said the lady. "Yet what sort of evidence would you bring me, truly, of this same attachment?—That of an old woman, who, in her folly,

sees every thing just according to the way her wishes may lead her fancy. I will believe Stewart himself before a dozen such crones, especially where self-interest, and the interest of her girl, must so evidently sway her. Let me but try my influence on him, and thou shalt see how soon he will forget this peasant maid. Thou shalt see"——

" I grieve to find that thou art so resolved to blind thyself, niece!" interrupted Sir Piers, very seriously; " but it is alike my duty to see that you neither run into hopeless misery, nor try to convert that misery into happiness, by unjustly and cruelly ruining the peace of another. I shall again visit the Widow's cottage, this very afternoon. I shall see and converse with the daughter herself, after which I shall hold plainer converse than I have ever yet done with Stewart. If I find that you have judged correctly, and that there is nothing more in this matter than that the mother hath allowed her judgment to be warped by her wishes, my best endeavours shall not be wanting to accomplish those desires which thou hast so clearly exposed to me. But I tell

thee honestly, that if, on the other hand, I find that the Widow has judged and reported truly, I shall, for your sake, as well as for that of Stewart, do all I can to promote his union with Rosa MacDermot."

" Say'st thou so, old man?" muttered the Lady Marcella to herself, after her uncle had left her; " then must I act—aye, and act quickly, and boldly too."

After a moment's thought, she clapped her hands for her page, and sent him directly to entreat that Stewart would favour her with a private interview immediately. He came at her summons; and, after the usual salutations were over, she, with a face that, spite of her determined and dauntless character, absolutely burned, from the very nature of the communication she had resolved to make, entered upon it in a low yet steady and unbroken tone.

" I take it for granted, Stewart," said she, " that the few words I let fall, the other day, when we were returning from our pursuit after the caitiff Catteranes, were not thrown away upon one of your quick wit. They were not uttered

without intention; and they have, I trust, proved to thee that thy rare merits have not escaped my notice, and that I take no common interest in thee."

The Lady Marcella paused for an answer; and the astonished Charley Stewart, having mumbled some confused and ill-connected expressions of gratitude for her good opinion, she continued in a yet calmer and more collected tone.

"I have thus sent for thee, honestly to confess to thee, that the interest I take in thee is of a nature, which could not permit me to see unmoved, one, who is so manifestly born for better fortunes, ignorantly to mar them from too humble an estimation of his own merits, and, without looking higher, blindly to tie himself down from all chance of rising, by rashly binding himself to baseness and poverty. If ever a desire of turning the issues of fate into their proper course, might be an excuse for a woman speaking out more openly and plainly than tyrant custom has permitted her sex to do, certain I am it might be reasonably held to be in the present case. But, were it otherwise, thou

hast already seen enough of me to know, that I am no ordinary woman; and I, who have dared much, would dare this too—yea, and ten times more, to secure mine own peace, and thy happiness. Reflect, then, on the words I uttered as we returned from our expedition. Know, that Fortune hath not refused to shine on thy deserts, for she now offers thee the hand and fortune of her who addresses thee."

"Lady!" exclaimed Charley Stewart, staggering back with absolute amazement, and altogether unable to answer coherently, from the confusion he was thrown into—"I have been foolishly reserved, lady. I have been strangely and grievously misconceived. Yet I thought I had spoken plainly enough.—I—I—I am altogether unworthy of any one of thy station. I am already pledged to another."

"I was not altogether unprepared for some such confession," said the lady, with a self-possession, arising from the circumstance, that she spoke truly. "I had heard, and I did see enough to make me aware that something had passed between thee and the silly girl MacDer-

mot. But these were childish ties, entered into when thou couldst have no foreknowledge of thine own fortunes; and they must, of stern necessity, yield to that expediency which now demands thine exaltation."

"Lady," replied Stewart, who by this time began to be somewhat more master of his faculties, "I have learned enough to know that true exaltation can never be purchased by treachery, perfidy, and cruelty. Rosa MacDermot and I loved one another whilst she was yet a child, it is true, but we have loved one another ever since with a growing affection, which has produced vows of the most solemn nature between us. I love her more than I do life itself; and not for all the wealth or honours that this world could bestow, would I cease to love her."

"So great a constancy, and so true a heart, proves but the more how much thou wert born for knighthood," said the lady, calmly. "And perhaps, entangled as thou seemest to have been, it might have been due to such honour as might befit a knight, to have clung to engagements so made. But to render such a case of

so great self devotion rational, it would at least be requisite that it should be mutual. Hast thou proof that it is really so? Hast thou never had doubts on that score? No suspicions?"

"Proof of the love of Rosa MacDermot, lady?" exclaimed Charley, with astonishment. "Doubts of Rosa? I should as soon ask for proof that the blessed sun gives light, or have doubts that the glorious orb might drop from the firmament."

"Other men before thee have been as honestly confiding, and yet have been deceived," said the lady. "The humble soil where thou hast rooted thine affections, is not always that which produces the most virtuous fruits."

"What wouldst thou hint, lady?" demanded Charley, in a disturbed and agitated tone.

"I grieve to tell thee," replied the lady. "It pains me to be compelled to undeceive thee, by withdrawing thee from thy pleasing dreams, to look boldly on the afflicting truth. Yet I must tell thee, that thy heroic constancy hath not been met by a like unshaken return of it."

Say—what?—Holy saints protect me!" cried Charley Stewart, in a greatly agitated and excited manner. "What wouldst thou insinuate lady? Rosa unfaithful?—Oh! impossible!—Where is the liar who hath thus abused thine ear regarding her who is purity and truth itself? Tell me his name, that I may make my sword drink his base black heart's blood!"

"Be calm, Stewart," replied the lady, with imperturbable placidity of manner. "Thou wilt gain nothing by yielding thyself up to blind rage. I trust thou wilt see that it is no ordinary affection in me that can prompt me to the disclosure that I am now about to make to thee."

"Speak on, lady. Oh keep me not in suspense!" cried Charley Stewart, wildly breaking in on her mysterious pause.

"Stewart," said the lady, solemnly, "thou wert prepared to withstand all temptation that might be calculated to break the rash vows of youthful ignorance. But she for whom you made them—she for whose sake thou wouldst have so honourably maintained them to the

sacrifice of wealth and advancement—she, I fear, has had less resolution to resist their allurements. Be not too much astonished or shocked, for I must tell thee, that mine uncle, Sir Piers Gordon, is the favoured lover of Rosa MacDermot."

"Thine uncle Sir Piers, Lady?" cried Charley, petrified with surprise. "Impossible! it cannot be!"

"Strange as it may seem to thee, and strange as it unquestionably is," replied the Lady Marcella, "it is in reality but too true that she favours his visits for her own purposes. He has already found his way to the Widow's cottage more than once, and he has even ventured to hint to myself that he has not been coldly received—and then, Stewart——"

"Lady," interrupted Charley, impatiently and violently, "I would not believe even Sir Piers himself if he were to tell me this!——and yet," added he, after a pause, during which he struck his forehead with the palm of his hand, and seemed to be immersed in deep thought, "and yet, he was strangely struck with her when first

they met!—But the time is so short—so very short since then—she!—Rosa! Oh, Rosa never could have been brought, in so short a time, to forget the days of her childhood, and her oft repeated vows to me!"

"Reflect, Stewart," said the lady, "that mine uncle is a landed laird, and a belted knight, with spurs at his heels!"

"What!" exclaimed Charley Stewart, in an intense agony of excited feeling, and with a half choked voice, "landed laird, saidst thou! a belted knight, with spurs at his heels! Can it be? Oh! that accursed prophecy of that most accursed hag! But art thou sure of what thou sayest, lady? How canst thou satisfy me? By all the holy saints I must be satisfied!"

"Nay," replied Marcella, coolly, "I can satisfy thee no otherwise than by saying that I have his own word for it, and—"

"His own word!" cried Charley; "Oh, wicked, wicked, and most deceitful man, thus wilfully to undermine me! Though I was less open in thy presence, lady, yet I said enough to him

afterwards, to have enabled even a fool and a dotard, to have read my meaning."

"So indeed he hinted," replied Marcella; "but then his apology for the interpretation which he hath found it convenient to put upon thy words is, that he has been encouraged by the girl herself. And as he was with her but yesterday, if he had not spoken truly as to this, he would have hardly hurried back again thither so soon as he has now done."

"Back, didst thou say, Lady?" exclaimed Stewart, growing black with rage and jealousy. "Back!—whither?—when?—how?—Oh, my brain is burning! Back, didst thou say?"

"Yea," replied the Lady Marcella, with perfect calmness, "mine uncle, Sir Piers, hath gone to visit Rosa MacDermot this very afternoon. He parted from me for that purpose but a few minutes before thou camest in hither. He is on his way thither now. Go!—convince thyself! But be prudent. Act not rashly. Forget not that a knight, such as he is, hath a natural belief in him that he is entitled to some

little license, where the matter concerns those only of such low degree as the girl Rosa Mac-Dermot can boast of."

Charley Stewart listened to those words of the Lady Marcella with a fixedness of eye, and of aspect, that was almost too fearful for her, bold as she was, to look upon. He seemed intent upon devouring every syllable she uttered. And yet, his intentness of gaze was more like that of a maniac, than of a rational man. She had no sooner finished than he ground his teeth, clenched his hands, struck them both with violence upon his bosom, and then rushed from the chamber, without giving utterance to a word.

" I have stung him to the quick," muttered the Lady Marcella, in soliloquy, after he was gone. " And now," added she, bitterly, " my prudent uncle has some chance of learning, to his cost, that it were better to face the lean and starving lioness, when preying for food for her famished whelps, than to step between a woman and her love. I never meant to have brought this upon him. He hath brought it altogether upon himself; and now let him look to it, that

his heritage be not mine, some few good years before he would have had it descend upon me. Should the plot chance to work so, my triumph over this youth will be easy and certain."

The honest old knight, Sir Piers Gordon, had ridden quietly over the hill, attended only by two of his people, and having left them to take charge of his horse, in the wood, at no great distance from the Widow's cottage, he had walked up thither alone. Mrs. MacDermot had been too much gratified by his friendly talk, during his former visit to her, not to have made her daughter acquainted with all that passed. Though his present call was unlooked for, Rosa was already so far prepared to expect that his visit was a visit of kindness, that she readily obeyed the request, which he conveyed to her through her mother, to favour him with her presence. He spoke to her with all the kindness of a father, and, in answer to his inquiries, she blushingly unbosomed herself to him, as if he had stood to her in that degree of relationship. She felt, indeed, that he was the patron and the benefactor of him who was all in this world to

her, and she was, from this cause, already prepared to love and reverence him. He was full of benevolent plans for the accomplishment of their union, and the furtherance of their happiness, and he sat with her on the turf-seat at the cottage door, expounding them to her, with her hand affectionately in his, and with his face eagerly turned towards her, in the earnestness of his conversation, till the sun, which shed his parting radiance upon them, was just about to sink behind the opposite mountain. Even the sound of a furiously galloping horse, which came thundering towards them, failed to arouse them from their interesting talk. Suddenly it burst out from the woodland, foaming and panting upon the green, within a few yards of the spot where they were sitting together, and a man, more like a maniac than a rational being, threw himself from the saddle. His naked sword was gleaming in his hand, ere his feet had well touched the ground. It was Charley Stewart.

"Traitor!" cried he in a hoarse choking voice, "up and defend thy vile life!"

" Charley ! Charley !" cried Rosa, springing towards him, " harm not a hair of his head !"

" What ! perjured girl !" cried Charley, pushing her from him so rudely, as to extend her at some distance from him, nearly senseless on the green ; " wouldst thou whet the very edge of my sword against him, by thy base entreaties for him ? Come on, traitor !"

" Stewart, are ye mad ?" cried the Knight ; " listen to reason."

" Cowardly traitor that thou art, I will listen to nothing from thee ;" cried Charley Stewart, gnashing his teeth and foaming at the mouth with fury. " Draw and defend thyself ; or, by Heaven, I will forthwith rid thee of thy vile dastard life ! draw, I say !"

" Nay, he must be mad !" cried Sir Piers. Yet I must defend my life, though it should be to the peril of his."

But Sir Piers, who sought only to protect himself from Charley's furious assault, accidentally failed in his very first guard. The weight of his assailant's blow broke through it, and fall-

ing upon the Knight's head, which had then nothing on it but a bonnet, it stretched him motionless on the sward. Charley Stewart stood for a moment to look with horror upon his work—the blood was gushing forth from the wound, and dying the white hair of him who had been his patron and friend. From that he turned and gazed upon the prostrate figure of Rosa MacDermot, who still lay in a kind of half-swoon from the effects of his violence. He felt as if his bursting heart would have forced its way through his side. Roused from his trance by the screams of the Widow MacDermot, he heard the galloping of horses approaching, and, rushing mechanically into the thickest part of the wood, he made his way towards the mountains, where night soon overtook him. Still he continued to wander on, however, without fixed intention or direction; and it was only on finding, at day-break, that he had already fled far towards the south, that, after having given due way to his affliction, he resolved to travel towards Edinburgh, to seek his father, where, as we have

already seen, he ultimately arrived, weary and woe-begone.

The next morning, after Charley Stewart's appearance in Edinburgh, his father, Sir Walter Stewart, aroused him from the deep sleep into which his fatigue of body had thrown him, and which, as it was nearly the first he had had since the sad events which had driven him from the north, even their cruel influence upon his mind could not disturb. In reply to Sir Walter's inquiries, he gave him a brief statement of his history and his misfortunes, and his wounded spirit was soothed by the kind sympathy which Sir Walter manifested towards him.

"Charley," said he, "thy fate hath been a cruel one, truly; but thou must bestir thee to shake off thy sorrows. Nothing better, as a cure for melancholy, than action. I have an emprise on hand, that is for thee the very medicine that thou lackest, and as it may speedily end with thee in a journey to France, as the esquire of a knight whom it will do thee much honour to serve, it is, of all others, the very

best chance that could befal thee under present circumstances. But the morning wears, and we must go to work without farther loss of time."

Sir Walter Stewart having disguised himself, and his son Charley, in broad slouched hats and cloaks, they sallied forth together. At the head of the close, they found two hacknies in the High Street, held by a single groom. They leaped into their saddles, and, without any inquiry or explanation as to whither they were bound, they rode forth together, at a gentle pace, from the southern part of the city, as if they had been bent more upon pleasure than business. They had not gone farther in that direction than just beyond the Burgh Loch, a piece of water which then occupied that extent of flat low ground now known by the name of *The Meadows*, when Sir Walter turned his horse's head to the westward, and, spurring forward, he and Charley galloped together through the woodland, the groves, and the thickets, which partially covered the Burgh Muir, and gradually sweeping round at a point considerably to the westward of the Castle rock, they then pushed

forward at a furious pace in a northerly direction, making straight for that part of the shore of the Firth of Forth, lying immediately to the westward of the citadel of Leith. That which is now a continuous town, was then almost a wilderness of sandy hillocks, which stretched considerably farther into the sea than the land now does, its waters having since much encroached on that part of the coast during the lapse of ages. Taking up a position on a bare elevated spot, Sir Walter looked with anxious eyes towards the road-stead. There were but few vessels there; but one seemed to be slowly coming up to her anchorage, with a fair breeze from the east, but with her sails so curtailed as betokened caution in those on board. Sir Walter seemed to eye her with peculiar interest for some time, and then he addressed a rough red-faced pilot, who was standing below on the beach, beside his boat, watching the vessel stedfastly, as if he wished to make out what sort of craft she might be.

"Is not that a foreign barque, friend?" demanded Sir Walter.

"Aye, aye, sir," replied the pilot; "she is a furrenner. If I'm not far mista'en it's the Garron of Burdy, Captain Davy Trummel, with wine aboard. I think I kenn her rig—and a clever rig it is, let me tell ye."

"She seems a goodly sea-boat, well fitted to fly quickly over so long a voyage," replied Sir Walter carelessly.

"That she is, I'll be sworn sir," answered the pilot. "Few in the trade can match her, I promise ye. But what strange mortals them French Munseers are after all: why they should call a vessel a Garron, the which is the swiftest bit of a craft my eyes ever came across, I can't nowise reasonably comprehend, unless it be out of a mere spirit of contradiction. But I must call out the lads, and be off to her, for there's the signal flying for me."

"Thou shalt take me aboard with thee, and have something for thy guerdon," said Sir Walter. "I would taste this Frenchman's wines, ere the palates of the good Burghers become acquainted with them."

"Willingly will I do thy pleasure, sir," replied the man; and, running towards a solitary cottage which stood upon a bank hard by, he began shouting out, "Jemmy!" and "Harry!" till two lads, who were his sons and assistants, appeared.

"Thou must tarry here with the horses, till I return from on board, Charles," said Sir Walter. "This is the very vessel I looked for—the Garonne of Bordeaux, Captain De Tremouille. He is an old friend of mine, and I would fain have some talk with him."

Sir Walter was speedily rowed on board by the pilot and his two sons. The barque took up her proper ground, under the directions which the helmsman received from the experienced old sailor. The anchor was let go, and she swung round to her moorings. Charley Stewart passed a considerable time in walking the horses about ere he saw the boat leave the barque. At length he beheld it pulling towards the shore, and Sir Walter again joined him, bearing two large bundles, which were stowed away behind their

saddles, in such a manner as to be covered by their cloaks as they rode, and following the same circuitous route which they had taken in their way out, they returned to the city, and regained the Knight's lodgings without observation.

AN UNWELCOME VISITOR.

CLIFFORD.—Stop one moment, Serjeant. See how the rain has made its way through the chinks of the window, and deluged the floor.

SERJEANT.—Mercy on me, so it has, sir! Well, I'm sure it's no wonder. Such a blast as that which is rairding without, would drive it through a stone wall.

GRANT.—Call the girl from the kitchen, like a good man.

SERJEANT.—Here, lassie!—We're like to be all drowned at this end of the house. Bring some cloths, will ye, and dish-clouts, and dry up this deluge here.

LASSIE.—Keep us a', siccana sight! But we're no one hair better in the other end o' the house.

CLIFFORD.—Aye, that's a good girl. Now lay

some of these cloths along the window here. Aye, that will do. I think that ought to make us water-tight. Now, heap some more wood and peats on the fire before you go. Thank ye—that's glorious. Now, let the storm howl as it likes.

GRANT.—Do go on with your story, Serjeant. You were interrupted in a most interesting part of it.

CLIFFORD.—"Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks!"—I beg your pardon, Sergeant; pray proceed.

AUTHOR.—Aye, pray do proceed. I am anxious to know what Sir Walter Stewart's plans are, and how he succeeded in carrying them into effect. This part of the history is well known; but the minuter details are nowhere told in any book I am acquainted with, and I am curious to hear them.

SERJEANT—(*taking a long draught from his punch-jug.*)—You shall be satisfied immediately, sir.

THE LEGEND OF CHARLEY STEWART TÀILLEAR-CRUBACH CONTINUED.

Soon after his return home, from his visit to the barque Garonne, Sir Walter Stewart got rid of his disguise, put on a courtier's attire, and hastened to the Castle, to pay his usual attendance of ceremony on the King. This he made a point of never neglecting, notwithstanding the marked curtailment which his private, and more familiar intercourse with his Majesty had received. Whilst within the walls of the fortress, he contrived, quietly and without suspicion, to make himself master of the state of the roster of the officers of the royal guard. To his no small satisfaction, he discovered that the captain of the guard, for the next day, was to be a certain individual of the name of Strang, whom he knew to be a worthless, reckless, hard-drinking, gaming

fellow. He then made all the observations that circumstances permitted, and, pleased with the information he had acquired, he returned to his lodging, in order fully to acquaint Charley with it, as well as with the whole of his plans, and with the manner in which he proposed to carry them into execution, so as to make him perfectly comprehend the part which he intended that he should play in them. To lull all after surmise regarding himself, as much as possible, he that evening appeared in the apartments of Sir William Rogers, and bore his share in the performance of the music that was given there. He then kept his appointment with the Earl of Huntly, in order to tell him that all was prepared, and, after a hasty interview, shortened by their apprehensions of being detected together, a circumstance which might have been ruinous to their projects, Sir Walter retired to his lodging for the night.

Some little time after guard-mounting, next morning, the bundles which they had brought from the French vessel were opened, and the Knight, and his son, proceeded to disguise them-

selves, by putting on the attire of French sailors, which they contained; and so perfectly did Sir Walter succeed in this operation, that his most intimate friend could not have known him. Wrapped up in cloaks, they then took their stand within the dark threshold of a deep doorway, that opened from the obscure entrance of the close where Sir Walter lodged. This was a position from which they could see every one who passed up or down the High Street, without a chance of their being themselves seen.

They had not stood long there, until their ears caught the distant, but unceasing jabber of the French tongue, coming up the High Street. It came from half a-dozen or more voices at once, all being talkers and none listeners. The noise grew louder and louder, until Sir Walter, by stretching out his neck from his lurking-place, espied the captain or skipper of the French barque, approaching with some eight or ten of his crew. They came walking along close to the houses on his side of the way. They carried two small casks of wine, each of them slung on a pole between two men, who were changed from

time to time as they required relief, whilst another man carried a little runlet on his shoulders. Sir Walter gave a particular whistle, and in a moment the whole party turned in under the covered entrance of the close, and laid down their burdens as if to rest themselves. In an instant, Sir Walter and Charley Stewart threw off their cloaks, and transferred them to two of the French sailors, who immediately retired into the Knight's lodgings, whilst he and his son succeeded to the burdens they had carried. Having effected this change, Sir Walter held some private talk with Captain De Tremouille, after which the party moved on up the street, and so up the Castle-Hill, until they came to the castle gate. There the French skipper, in broken English, told the sentinel that he would fain speak a word to the captain of the guard, for whom he was the bearer of a small present of wine, and he and his whole party were speedily admitted.

" I do ave von leetil praisaint of vine for you, sare," said the skipper, boldly addressing the scarlet-visaged captain of the guard. " Dis leetil

cask for your own taste.—De richest vine in de varld."

"Thou art an especial good fellow, sir," replied the captain, clumsily returning the exquisite bow which the Frenchman had made him, whilst, at the same time, he eyed the runlet, and immediately consigned it to the particular care of one of his own people. "Nothing could possibly come more opportunely, and I am most grateful for thy courtesy. It must be confessed that you Frenchmen are the most perfect gentlemen in the world, and know how to do a thing genteelly."

"Ah, sare, dat is too mosh compliment for me as van Frainchman," replied the skipper, with a smile and a bow yet lower than his former one. "And de compliment is more bettaire dat she come from van so grait hero as de Capitaine Strang! Admirasion for de fame of him, did make me ave de grait desire to honnaire myself wid praisant him vid dis leetil gift, for vitch liberty I do hope he is not offend."

"Offended, my dear fellow!" cried Captain Strang; "thy runlet comes to me as welcome as

the very flowers in May! But how the pest dost thou chance to know my name, Sir Skipper?"

"De name and de fame of de grat hero, is alvaise know by all men all over de varld," replied the skipper, with another most obsequious reverence.

"By St. Andrew, but this is a curious marvel though," said the captain. "Who would have thought that my name could have been known in France as a hero! Yet certain it is that I have done some small deeds in my time, that these French mooshies may have heard of."

"Deeds, Monsieur le Capitaine!" cried De Tremouille, with feigned astonishment; "Vondaires in battaile! meeracailes in de feelde! van Achille of Scotlande! But all dat is nossing at all compare to de fame of Monsieur le Capitaine for his vonderful taste for de good vine! Ven dey do talk of good vine in France, dey do alvaise say—Aha! dis is vine fit for de pallait of van Empereur; bot dis 'ere is more bettaire, dis is fit for de pallait of de famous Scottish hero, de Capitaine Strang, dat do know good

vine more bettaire dan any oder man in de varld."

"By all the saints, that is wonderful!" said the captain; "and yet that I can more easily understand. Yes, yes; few people can match me there. And then, to be sure, these wine-dealers in France must know some little of those who are judges of the good stuff, and who, moreover, like myself, do so much to encourage their trade. But hark ye, Mr. Skipper! what do ye with those other two casks which those fellows of thine are carrying?"

"Ah hah! dat is von praisant pour de Duc d'Albanie," replied the skipper.

"Ha!" cried the captain of the guard, with a certain air of suspicion; "the Duke of Albany, saidst thou? How comest thou to have a present for the Duke of Albany?"

"Oh yaes, sare!" replied the imperturbable skipper, with great apparent innocence, "de vine is von cadeau, vat you do call praisant from de marchand at Bordeaux, vid de expectation dat de squisite taste of him may make mi Lor Duc

to ave mor of him pour de l'argent, and prevail on de Royal King, his broder, to ave some too also."

"Um—aye," said the captain of the guard, with hesitation; "likely story enough—though there be but little chance of the King drinking ought of the Duke's providing, whatever liquor the Duke may by and bye drink of his Majesty's brewing. But 'twas natural enow in the merchant to think so, Mooshie. As for the Duke, he is no bad customer to his own fist, when he is well set with a jolly boon companion, such as myself for instance. So thou mayest as well leave thy twin-casks in my charge, friend; and I shall see that they are properly delivered.—At least," added he, in an under voice, aside, "I shall take care most conscientiously to deliver them in due time of their contents."

"Tank you—very mosh tank you, sare," replied the skipper. "Mais I not trobil you. De marchand did ordaire me to see dem in de royal hand of de Duc heemself. If I not do dat, I most take heem back again. Jean! François! il faut ——"

"Um !—don't be so hasty, man," interrupted the captain of the guard, by no means willing to lose sight of the casks, and hesitating, and cogitating within himself, that if the wine was taken back, he would lose all chance of tasting it; whereas, if it was once lodged with the Duke, he had a fair prospect of being invited to share in it. "You Mooshies are as pestilent hasty as a bit of touch paper. Thou shalt deliver the wine thyself to the Duke. Here, Laurence—the keys of the Duke's apartments! Now, Mooshie, do thou and three of thy fellows quickly shoulder the casks and follow me."

The skipper immediately took up one end of the pole that swung one of the casks, and addressing Sir Walter Stewart by the name of Jean, he called to him roughly, in French, to take up the other end. Charley Stewart and a sailor hoisted up the second cask; and so they followed the captain of the guard up to the Duke's apartments.

When the doors were opened, which gave access to the royal prisoner, they found the Duke of Albany sitting at a table in conversa-

tion with his chamberlain, his manly and somewhat stern countenance deprived of much of its wonted bloom and sunshine, from the confinement to which he had been subjected, and the melancholy anticipations which possessed his mind, though nothing had as yet been able to overpower his indomitable resolution. It was only when he arose from his chair, to ascertain what his visitors came about, that his powerful and well-proportioned person, and his broad chest, were fully exhibited.

"What is all this?" cried the Duke, somewhat impatiently.

"So please your Highness' Grace, this French Mooshie skipper is the bearer of a present of that which he states to be very choice wine of his country's growth," said Captain Strang, with a low obeisance.

"Who can have thus remembered me in my misfortunes?" demanded the Duke.

"Nay," replied Strang, "I question if either the giver of the gift, or he that hath it in charge, know ought of the position in which your Royal

Highness is now placed. But stand forth, Sir Mooshie, and tell thine own tale."

"Eh bien," cried the skipper, advancing, and bowing three or four times to the ground; "Je le ——"

"Hold! hold! Mooshie!" interrupted Captain Strang; "none of thine own outlandish language, dost thou hear? Thou canst speak our tongue well enow for all purposes, so keep to that, if it so please thee."

"Very vell, Monsieur le Capitaine String," replied the skipper, with a shrug, and a grimace, that showed his disappointment in being thus prevented from speaking to the Duke, in a language which would have veiled all he said from the apprehension of the captain of the guard—"Very vell, Monsieur le Capitaine; I vill make van attente to make onderstand de bad Englis of me to his Royal Highness de Duc d'Albanie. —I ave been send vid dis two cask of vin, as van cadeau from de marchand Beauvilliers at Bordeaux, to his Highness Royal de Duc d'Albanie, vid de ope dat de magnifique flaveur of

de vine may please heem, and procure for de marchand van large ordaire from his Highness Royal, and from his royal broder, his Majesty de King."

"I can promise nothing for his Majesty, friend," replied the Duke; "but for myself, I would have ye thank Monsieur Beauvilliers from me, and say to him, that if the wine liketh me well, I shall send him an order; that is to say, if there be aught of likelihood of my being alive to drink of it when it comes to hand.—But what sort of wine is it that thou hast brought me?"

"In dat cask dere is shoise vine of Gascony," said the skipper, pointing to that which Charley Stewart had helped to bear; "bot, goot as it is, I am force to tink dat de oder vine, in dis cask, vill give more plaisir to son Altesse Royale."

"Sir," said Sir Walter, bringing forward the cask, and speaking to the skipper in French, as if he were merely applying to him for orders, but in a tone so loud and distinct as to insure that the Duke should catch every word that fell

from him—"do not show surprise at what I say, or recognise me, if you discover me.—We are all friends. This cask contains the means of escape, with instructions how you are to effect it. Let not the captain of the guard depart without an invitation to supper; the contents of this cask will tell you why."

"Sacre cochon!" cried the skipper, with an angry air, and at the same time bestowing a smart blow of a rattan on the shoulders of Sir Walter. "Sacre cochon que vous estes!"

"What did the fellow say to thee, friend skipper?" demanded the captain of the guard; "and what didst thou say to him?"

"Mine Got! Monsieur le Capitaine String," replied the skipper, "dis crew of mine is so great idil vans, dat dey vear out de patience of van Job heemself. I not be come to dis place ardly van moment, and bifore I decharge my cargo, ven dey must vant to leif me alone, and to go to run all over de cite, after de dance, and de Scottis preetee lasses. Be Gar, Monsieur Jean, you sall vork more vork pour dis, dat I do tell you, mon garçon."

"Fear nothing, sir," said Sir Walter, again in French, and humbly bowing to the skipper, as if making an earnest and contrite apology to his master; "act boldly; remember the south-western side—there thou shalt find friends beyond the walls."

"Aha, Coquin!" cried the skipper; "mais vous avez joué votre role à merveille ——"

"What said the fellow? and what was thine answer to him?" demanded the captain of the guard again.

"Par bleu, Monsieur le Capitaine String, I ave make heem bon garçon at last," replied the skipper; "I do ave make heem cry peccavée."

"Was that all?" said the captain, gruffly. "Then come away, Mooshie, let us clear out of this. Thou and thy fellows have been long enough here."

"Before thou goest, I would speak with thee, Captain Strang," said the Duke. "If fame and mine own experience belie thee not, thou art great in thy judgment of wines. Wilt thou lend me thy company to-night at supper, that we may taste the stuff which this fellow hath

brought me, of the rare quality of which he makes so great a boast?"

"Your Royal Highness's Grace does me too much honour," replied Strang, with a most obsequious bow. "My taste is but a poor and uncultivated taste; but I shall be proud to perfect it under your Royal Highness's superior judgment and instruction."

"Then let us have supper at four, good captain," said the Duke; "and as my chamberlain here would fain invite those three poor knaves who guard the door, to watch for once within side of it, and to partake of his table, I would have thee see that, at my expense, enough of the best viands be provided for all."

"Your Highness is too considerate," replied Strang. "Yet, since your royal will runs so, it shall be obeyed to the letter. The supper shall be such as shall content you." And then retiring, and shutting and locking the door upon his prisoners, he descended the outer steps, muttering to himself,—"The supper may well be a good one indeed, and thou mayest well eat and drink thy fill; for, if I be not far mistaken,

it may be the last supper thou mayest eat, and the last wine thou mayest swallow."

The skipper and his party now left the Castle, without farther question; and as they passed by the mouth of the close where Sir Walter Stewart lived, on their way down the High Street, the knight and his son were replaced by the two French sailors, in the same adroit manner in which the change had been formerly effected; and they gained their lodgings, and got rid of their disguise, without having subjected themselves to the least suspicion, whilst the skipper continued his way out of the city, with the same number of followers as he had always had with him.

No sooner was the Duke of Albany free from the chance of interruption, than he and his chamberlain proceeded to wrench up the end of that cask which Sir Walter Stewart had so ingeniously and so particularly indicated, as the important one to the royal captive. They found it altogether devoid of wine; but, to their no small joy, they found within it a long coil of rope, and a large roll of wax. Their first care

was to replace the rope, and to shut up the cask again, and then to roll it into the corner, where they set it on end immediately in rear of that which contained the wine. They then hastily opened the roll of wax, and discovered that it contained a letter from Sir Walter, explaining the whole plan for their escape. Having studied this again and again, so as fully to possess themselves of its contents, they committed it to the ample fire-place, where it was immediately consumed, and then they sat down together to resolve and arrange all the minor parts and details of their plot. Whilst they were so employed, Captain Strang was unable to resist the devil that tempted him to taste his little runlet. It was excellent wine. He boldly, and with great determination, put in the spigot again, and gallantly retreated from it. But again and again was he drawn to it by an attraction as strong as that which the loadstone exerts over the needle. Again and again he drew the spigot, and sipped moderately. He would have drank deeply, had not economy whispered him that he had better preserve it for a future opportunity, seeing that

he had the prospect of that night drinking so largely at another's expense. But still he sipped and sipped from time to time, so that, although far from drunk when he appeared in the Duke of Albany's apartment—nay, I may say, far from being even what is usually called half seas over—he had so whetted his thirst as to be ready to drink oceans; and the foundation he had laid was quite enough for a superstructure of perfect intoxication.

As the supper was to be partaken of by him and his people at the Duke's expense, the captain of the guard had taken especial care to see that it was a good one. His Royal Highness sat at a small table near the huge fire-place, with Captain Strang upon his left hand. There they were first served by the chamberlain, and the three men of the guard, with all the delicacies they chose to call for; and large beakers of the new wine being placed before them, the captain gave full way to his Bacchanalian inclinations. By and bye they began to play at dice and tables, whilst the chamberlain and his three guests were supping. Though already not a

little affected by the wine he had swallowed, the captain preserved enough of his cunning and knavish brains, to enable him to cheat most villanously. This did not escape the Duke, but he took care not to appear to perceive it—cursed his ill luck—and went on to lose, much to the satisfaction of his opponent, whilst the knavish Strang was secretly congratulating himself upon his own wonderful strength of head, which had so far prevailed over the comparative weakness of his royal adversary. Meanwhile the chamberlain was busily employed in supplying the captain, as well as his own peculiar guests, with wine, in the greatest abundance. By degrees, Strang became so much elevated, as to lose much of that obsequious respect with which he had at first treated his royal host.

"Delicious wine!" cried he, smacking his lips, after a long draught of it, which left his cup empty. "By the holy Virgin, delicious wine indeed! But—aw—aw—its goodness inflames me—aw—aw—with a furious desire to taste—aw—aw—to taste, I say, that other cask the French knave spoke of—aw—aw—that, I

mean, which stands yonder, behind—aw—aw—behind the barrel from which we have—aw—aw—been tasting; that, I mean—aw—aw—of which the French Mooshie spake so largely."

The chamberlain darted a look of agony at his master; but the Duke preserved a perfect composure.

"Thou shalt taste it forthwith, Sir Captain," said the Duke, giving, at the same time, a private signal to the chamberlain. "Go, use thy wimble, and bring us a flask of that other wine."

The chamberlain, understanding his master, went to the barrels, and concealing them as much as he could by stooping over both of them, he fumbled with the wimble at the second cask; and, whilst he pretended to fill the can from it, he slyly drew its contents from the same which had been running all night, and then he poured out two sparkling goblets, and set them down on the table.

"Well, Sir Captain," said the Duke, after Strang had taken a long draught of the wine,

"what sayest thou to it? Is it as good as that which thou hast been all night drinking?"

"That which we have been drinking all night—aw—aw—is but as hog's wash compared to it," cried the captain, his eyes beginning to goggle in his head, and emphatically dashing his empty cup down on the table. "No, no—aw—aw—my palate—aw—aw—is—aw—too true to be deceived that way. This, look ye, is a wine of—aw—aw—of superior growth, flavour, and body, not to be matched—not to be—aw—aw—matched, I tell ye—not to be matched."

"It is, indeed, excellent, as thou sayest," replied the Duke—"absolute nectar!—Come, fill our goblets again."

"By the Rood, but this is—aw—aw—wine indeed!" cried the captain of the guard again, after emptying his goblet for the second time. "It grows—aw—aw—better and better—aw—aw."

"I feel it whizzing in my very brain," said the Duke. "I doubt that thou wilt have but an easy conquest of me now, Sir Captain. But

come, nevertheless, play away, for I will have my revenge."

"What, ho, Sir Chamberlain," cried the captain, getting more and more inebriated, and becoming, at the same time, still more and more convinced of his own strength of brain and sobriety, and his superiority, in these respects, over the Duke, exemplified, as it was, by his still farther gains. "What ho !—aw—aw—more wine —more wine and—aw—aw—from the same cask, dost thou hear, Sir Chamberlain—aw—aw—from the self-same virtuous cask. Why the fiend did'st thou not draw from that cask—aw—aw—at first? Come, wine, I tell thee !—aw—aw—aw—pour us out more of that nectar; my throat—aw—aw—is parched, and—aw—aw—the more I drink—aw—aw—the more I would drink. Wine !—aw—aw—wine, I say, Sir Chamberlain !"

The chamberlain spared not to fill and refill his goblet, nor was he less assiduous in filling those of the three men of the guard, until overcome by the soporific effects of the oceans of wine which they poured down, combined with

those arising from the overwhelming heat of the rousing fire that had been purposely kept up, an irresistible drowsiness fell upon the captain and his men, and they, one after another, dropped into a deep sleep. The Duke, and his chamberlain, now armed themselves with knives from the table, and self-preservation having steeled up their minds to this bloody alternative, they sprang upon their defenceless victims. The work of death was speedy; all were despatched in a few moments. The keys were taken from the captain's girdle-belt. The corpses were piled one over the other in the huge fire-place, and more fuel was heaped upon them, in order to consume them. The coil of rope was secured. The doors were opened with the greatest caution, and, having slipped silently down the outer stair, they stole away to a lonely corner of the rampart, on the south-western side of the fortress, where the height and precipitous nature of the rock had been supposed to have rendered sentinels unnecessary; and where, though the descent might be more dangerous in itself, than at many other points in the vicinity, there was

less risk of their being surprised and frustrated in their attempt.

At the foot of the Castle rock, under that part of the walls which I have now indicated, Sir Walter Stewart, and his son Charles, had been waiting impatiently ever since the day-light had disappeared. The night was starry, but there was little moon. That they might the better observe the walls, they climbed up the steep rock, immediately below the point where they knew that the attempt was likely to be made, till they came to the perpendicular part of the cliff, under the base of which they silently lay down to watch the event. After long and tedious expectation, during which they were often deceived by their fancy, they at length perceived a dark looking object getting over the top of the wall of the rampart, directly above them. They watched it with intense anxiety, as it began slowly to descend on them, till, as it neared them, they could distinguish it to be a human being, and the figure slowly grew upon their sight. The head and shoulders of another man thrust over the wall above, seemed anxiously to

watch the success of him who was lowering himself. For a moment the descending figure rested on the narrow ledge of the rock at the foundation of the wall, and then it again began to come down gently over the perpendicular face of the cliff, until it was within some ten or fifteen feet of them. Their hope was now high, when all at once the figure seemed to be arrested in its progress downward, and swung to and fro for a time.

"What stops you?" demanded Sir Walter Stewart, in a distinct but subdued voice.

"If this be all the rope, it is too short," said the person above them, in the same tone; "I have nothing now for it, but to take my chance and drop."

"Fear not!" said Sir Walter; "we shall try to catch thee in our cloaks. Now! drop boldly!"

"Now then!" said the man in the air.

But although the united strength of Sir Walter Stewart and his son enabled them so to receive him, as to save him from utter destruction, the shock of his fall was so great, as to crush both of them down, and it was with difficulty

that they prevented him and themselves from rolling down the rocky slope below them.

" How fares it with thee?" demanded Sir Walter.

" But indifferent well," replied the other, unable to rise, and manifestly in great pain. " I fear I have broken my thigh-bone."

" Holy Saint Andrew, what a misfortune!" exclaimed Sir Walter Stewart.

" Call it not a misfortune," said the attached and devoted chamberlain. " It was good that I tried it before the Duke, else might this accident have happened to him, and that indeed would have been a misfortune."

" What hath happened?" demanded a faint voice, that came from the Duke, whose head and shoulders still appeared over the wall above.

" A small accident, but not a fatal one," replied the chamberlain. " I am down; but beware, my gracious master, the rope is too short."

" How much may it want?" demanded the Duke.

"About four or five ells, or so;" replied Sir Walter.

"Tarry till I return then," said the Duke again. "But, hush! I must hide. Here come the rounds."

The tramp of feet, and the clink of arms, now came faintly on their ears, as they lay, drawn in as much as possible, under the rock. Voices, too, were heard, but at such a distance above them, that they could not tell whether they uttered sounds of jocularity, or of strife and contention. At last they passed away—but whether the royal duke had been detected or not, they had no means of knowing. A very considerable time elapsed, during which their eyes were fixed intently, and most anxiously, on that part of the top of the wall whence the head of the royal captive had last been seen to disappear. The pain of the chamberlain's fractured limb was excruciating, yet to him it was as nothing, compared to the agony of that suspense which was suffered by the whole three who waited for the result. At length, to their

inexpressible relief, they beheld the Duke's figure getting over the wall above them,—and down he came, slowly and gradually, till his toes touched the rocky ground on which they stood. Warm, though not loud, were the congratulations he received, and heartfelt were the thanks which he poured out upon his preservers—and deep was the grief which he uttered for the painful accident which had befallen his faithful servant. They learned from his Highness, that ere the rounds had approached near enough to observe him, he had laid himself down at length on the ground, within the deep shadow that prevailed under the wall; that they had passed within a few yards of him, talking and joking with each other, and most fortunately without observing him. They were no sooner fairly gone to the other parts of the walls, than he had stolen back to his prison, cut his blankets into ropes, and by this means supplied what was wanting of the length of that which had been furnished to him.

Altogether unmindful of his own safety, the Duke of Albany's first desire was to provide for

the proper care of his maimed chamberlain. It was with no small difficulty that they got him conveyed down the craggy slope, and when they reached the valley below, they halted, and held a consultation as to what was best to be done with him. The chamberlain himself proposed that they should carry him to the house of a friend of his own, near at hand, where he knew he would be concealed, and well cared for, and where he thought he could remain in safety until his broken limb should be so effectually cured as to enable him to make his escape.

"I will carry thee thither myself," said the Duke of Albany. "I can by no means flee hence, until I am assured of the safety of a servant, who hath ever been so devotedly faithful to me, and who is now, by the perversity of my fate, to be so painfully separated from me, when I most need his friendship."

"Nay, I do entreat your Royal Highness to flee without a moment's delay," said Sir Walter Stewart; "every moment is precious to you. Leave him to me, and, trust me, I will take every care of him."

"Nay, I cannot consent to that," said the Duke. "Thou must not be seen nor suspected to have had aught to do in this matter. Thou hast already periled thyself enough. The house he speaks of is but a little farther along this hollow way, I will carry him thither myself."

Sir Walter yielded to reason. They assisted the Duke to carry the chamberlain to a conveniently short distance from the house in question, the sufferer was then hoisted on his royal master's back, who speedily bore him safely into his place of concealment.

"Now," said Sir Walter to the Duke, when he had again joined them, a little way on beyond the house, "your Royal Highness must fly with all haste to the sea-side. This young man, who is a son of mine, will guide you to the spot where you will find a boat, which is ready waiting to convey you to the vessel that is prepared to carry you to France. He must supply the loss of your faithful chamberlain. Take him with you, my lord, and let him return to me when it may suit your convenience to part with him."

"He shall be mine especial esquire," said the Duke.—"Would I had a station to put him into, worthier of son of thine, and of one of his own apparent merits."

"Your Royal Highness is too kind," said Sir Walter. "Yet is the lad no disgrace to me, as I trust that you may find that he will prove none to you. May Saint Andrew give you safety and a prosperous breeze!—And here, Charley, take this ring as a pledge of a father's affection, and let the sight of it be ever to thee as a monitor to make thee do thy duty like a man."

Their parting was now warm, but brief. The Duke and his new attendant reached the sea-side in safety. Sir Walter, who had hastened around the shores of the North Loch, and climbed the Calton Hill, waited impatiently upon its summit till the first dawn of day-break. Then it was that he rejoiced to descry the white sail of the French barque, swoln by a merry and favourable breeze, pressing gallantly down the Firth, and he continued to watch it, until it was lost amidst the ruddy

haze of the sunrise. He then walked slowly down the eastern slope of the hill, towards Holyrood, and, making a wide circuit, he passed between Arthur Seat and Salisbury Craigs, through the hollow wooded valley, which, though now devoid of trees, is still well known by the name of the Hunter's Bog, and then, turning his steps towards the southern gates of the city, he muffled himself well up in his cloak, and entered it, unnoticed, amid the crowds of market people who where passing inwards at the Port of the Kirk of Field; and so he gained his lodging without observation. There he soon afterwards heard of the astonishment, mortification, and dismay, which had possessed the King on learning this strange event, which he could not bring himself to believe until he went to see, with his own eyes, the half-consumed corpses of the captain of the guard and his men, and the rope which still hung dangling over the wall of the castle.

Sir Walter Stewart seemed to remain altogether unsuspected of any share in the escape of the Duke of Albany, though every one was agreed in believing that his Royal

Highness must have been aided from without the walls. But whether it was that ideal suspicion that conscience of itself begets, or whether there really were some grounds for it, the Knight could not help feeling persuaded that the King looked colder than ever upon him. He failed not, however, on that account, to pay his duties at court most unremittingly, though, frequent as were his visits there, they were comparatively small in number to those which he paid to the house of Sir William Rogers, where he now worshipped, more fervently than ever, at the shrine of that enchantress, the fair Juliet Manvers. He now found himself so irretrievably the captive of her charms, that he had for some time ceased to struggle in her net, and it was not long after the escape of Albany, that he sought an audience of King James, that he might humbly communicate his contemplated nuptials to him, and crave his royal leave for their consummation, as well as for his retirement for a time from court, that he might carry his lady to visit his own territories in Stradawn, of which he was

to make her the mistress. From all that had lately passed, he was not much surprised that the King received his communication with apparent satisfaction, but he was very much astonished to find, that it procured for him the sudden and unexpected restoration of all that familiar cordiality of manner, which he had formerly, for so long a period, been in the constant habit of receiving from his Majesty.

"What!—marry!" cried the King. "And is this really so?—and a long attachment saidst thou?"

"An attachment that has grown since first we met, so please your gracious Majesty," replied Sir Walter.

"Strange!" said the King, as if pondering within himself—"strange that all this should have escaped me. And yet, now I think on't, I might have seen it.—We have done thee but scrimp justice, Sir Walter Stewart, but now, be assured, that we wish thee joy with all our heart. Thou hast indeed chosen a lovely bride. We—yea, and our Queen too—shall honour the wedding with our presence; and thy fair and

accomplished lady shall not lack such royal gifts, as may befit us to bestow, and thy wife to receive.—Trust me, that this wise step of thine hath much relieved—nay, we would say that it hath given us unfeigned joy."

Thus reassured of the King's favour, though from what cause he could not by any means divine, Sir Walter Stewart was happy. His marriage took place with great pomp of circumstances, in presence of King James and his Queen. Some months passed quickly and pleasantly away over the heads of the newly-married couple, who were especially detained at court, from one week to another, by the royal mandate,—and I need not tell you, that the lady basked with peculiar delight under the sunshiny smiles that fell upon her from the royal pair. Cochran was the only one about court who had reason to be dissatisfied with the match, seeing that he had himself shewn pretensions to Juliet Manvers, and had been in no little degree encouraged by her. But whether real or feigned, he manifested an especial cordiality towards Sir Walter, and he availed

himself of every possible opportunity of frequenting his society, and that of his lady. To the lady, indeed, he was at all times most particularly attentive, so much so, in fact, that Sir Walter hardly relished his uncalled for complaisance. Moreover, he thought he began to detect a certain relaxation of that earnest desire to please him, which, for her own purposes, Juliet had so long displayed towards him before their union. She had now less occasion for dissimulation, since her object was gained, and so it happened, that on more occasions than one, when impelled by the humour of the moment beyond the full restraint of her dissimulative powers, she had unveiled enough of her real character to make him doubt, whether her acceptance of him as her husband had been altogether the result of a disinterested affection for him. The seeds of unhappiness were thus thickly sown within his breast, and they began to vegetate so fast, that he at length came to the sudden resolution of carrying off his wife to his castle of Drummin.

" If thou art resolved to quit our court for a

season," said King James, when Sir Walter made his intentions known to his Majesty, "thou hast our royal permission, most unwillingly granted to thee, so to do. But say, what sort of habitation hast thou in the north?"

"'Tis but a rude dwelling, so please your Majesty," replied Sir Walter; "and somewhat the worse perhaps for the warfare which hath been waged against it by time and weather."

"Then shalt thou take Cochran, our architect, thither with thee, to plan and to order its amendment," replied the King.—"'Twas but the other day we were talking of thy concerns together, when he voluntarily offered to yield thee his best services."

"'Twas kind of him," said Sir Walter, biting his lips, "but I can in nowise think of so troubling him.—Indeed, for the present, I cannot well brook the expense of building, and I must e'en remain as I am for a time."

"That shall be no hindrance to thee, Stewart," said the King. "The stream of our royal bounty hath been untowardly diverted from thee for a time; it behooves us now to

refresh thy parched roots, so that thou mayest again raise thy drooping head. The means shall be found from our royal treasury for thy building, and Cochran shall go with thee to Drummin—so let us think no more of this matter, seeing I have so settled it."

Willingly would Sir Walter Stewart have dispensed with this most prominent mark of royal favour, but it was now impossible to decline it. Cochran received his Majesty's command, to hold himself in readiness to accompany Sir Walter Stewart and his lady to Stradawn, with secret delight, though he appeared to do so with that servile submission merely, with which he always bowed to the royal will, and for which he made himself ample amends by the arrogance with which he domineered over others. To Sir Walter Stewart he took especial care to be always smiling, pleasant, and accommodating; and although he complained, upon this occasion, that this northern journey was a severe obstruction to the prosecution of those architectural plans on which he pretended to rest his fame, he went down to Drummin with the intention

of spinning out his visit to as great a length as he could decently make it extend.

Sir Walter Stewart, for his part, had no sooner fairly set his foot on his own threshold, than a thousand recollections connected with the tower of Drummin, and its neighbouring scenery, crowded upon his mind. This return to the abode of his early days, recalled the remembrance of his young affections, and the contrast which thus arose, in spite of him, between those which he felt persuaded were bestowed on a creature who was innocent, natural, and true, and those which the sacrament of the holy church now demanded of him, as due to her whom he had so much reason to fear might turn out to be artful, artificial, and false, awakened certain unpleasant qualms within him, that he had failed to make that reparation to Alice Asher, which he once had it in his power to have made; and that now, by some strange witchery and infatuation, he had been led to shut the door against that, and his own peace of mind, by one rash and irrevocable act. A direful dread now fell upon him, that he was about to be severely punished for his neglect of one, whose

only sin might, with more justice, have been said to have been his—as it was incurred for him, and whose devotion to him, and whose whole conduct since her first and only error, had so well merited a different treatment at his hands. He could not trust his mind to think how much happier he might have now been with her. Nor did the image of his gallant Charley fail to haunt his imagination, and to fill him with self-reproaches. Now it was that his soul winced under the wholesome, though sharp stings of conscience, and the fair visions of ambition, which had so continually flitted through his brain, lost their sunshine, and disappeared for a time, amid the dull and damp mists of self-dissatisfaction that settled down upon it. He felt that though the trial must necessarily be a painful one, it might probably be productive of a certain degree of after-relief to him, if he could procure an interview with Alice Asher. A vow existed between them —a vow that she had extracted from him, immediately previous to the birth of Charley Stewart, that they should never again meet, except in the event of an approach to her on the part of Sir

Walter, for the purpose of offering her his hand in marriage. That, alas, was a reason which he could not urge now! But, on the ground of having to speak to her on the subject of her son, he sent for the good priest who was her confessor, and procured from him a dispensation from their mutual vow, so far as to admit of one short meeting between them. It took place; and, as you may easily imagine, their conference was of the tenderest, though purest description. It had more in it of tears than of smiles. Reproaches were there, it is true; but they came not from the meek, penitent, and forgiving Alice Asher; they were numerously and largely heaped by Sir Walter Stewart on his own devoted head. The parting was a scene which I could not venture to describe; and far less could I convey to you the slightest notion of that accumulation of anguish which choked up the heart of Sir Walter, after having had this opportunity of more truly and perfectly knowing the full value of that gentle and devoted spirit, the innocent confidence of whose youth he had so abused, and whom he had so recklessly excluded from his bosom, in order

to take home thither that cold and selfish heart which now legally possessed it. Full of such agonizing thoughts as these, he had as yet got but a short way on his return from the dwelling of Alice, when his musing walk was suddenly broken in upon by Cochran, who came unexpectedly out upon him from a side-path that emerged from the wood, into that along which he was then going.

"That cottage, so prettily perched up yonder among the wood, on the brow of the hill you have this moment descended, belongs doubtless to some favourite forester of thine, Sir Walter," said Cochran; "marry, the fellow is lodged in a palace, compared to those dens, scarcely fit for swine, in which the rude and savage inhabitants of this northern wilderness are seen to burrow themselves, like urchins, and which are hardly to be distinguished from the sterile and heath-covered soil on which they stand."

"It is a neat cottage," replied Sir Walter hastily; and, immediately changing the subject, he went on talking rapidly, and at random, until he got rid of Cochran, on their arrival at

Drummin; and, from the very dread of all farther impertinent questioning, he threw himself upon a horse, and rode away up the valley, under the pretence of some urgent business, and with the vain hope of shaking off his griefs.

"Now," said Cochran, as he freely entered the Lady Stradawn's private apartment; "Now, I can tell thee, that my suspicions are this very day verified. Now thou mayst have no grudge that thou hast at last restored to me some of that love, which was mine of right, and which should have always been mine, had not the scrannel pipe of this Sir Walter so unfairly whistled it from me."

"What wouldst thou insinuate?" demanded the lady, in some degree of surprise.

"I would only delicately hint, that thy husband Sir Walter is more in tune with another, than with thee," replied Cochran, with a coarse laugh. "I have told thee so before, and now I have proof of the truth of what I told thee."

"Proof, saidst thou?" cried the lady keenly. "What proof, I pray thee?"

"Did I not tell thee I had found him out?"

said Cochran. "Did I not tell thee that he visits the cottage that stands on the brow of the wooded hill yonder? I have this day proved that I was right, for I dogged his steps thither, saw him enter it, and watched him patiently, for two good hours, till he again issued forth. Nay, I know more. I know that she who inhabits it is an ancient sweatheart of his; but though an ancient lover, she is young,—aye! and moreover she is beautiful; for as I hovered about the place some two or three days ago, I chanced to get such a glimpse of her, as satisfied me of all that."

"Base villain!" cried the lady, in a rage; "I will be revenged of him, and of her too.—But," added she, again assuming the command of her feelings, "I shall take mine own time."

"Thou canst not be too speedy with thy vengeance as regards thy husband, if thou wouldst have me to help thee," said Cochran, with a vulgar leer—"for, hark ye!—a secret in thine ear—I must go to-morrow—my time hath been long enough uselessly wasted here,—thanks to thine obduracy; and then this building is so

far advanced towards completion, as hardly longer to require my master eye, so that little apology now remains for me for longer stay. Nor do I now will it much, seeing that it is of none effect; so I shall e'en hasten back to the court, to look after this earldom of Mar, which the King hath been talking of bestowing upon me, as a successor, much more worthy of it, than his traitorous brother who held it. 'Tis well for me to be on the spot; yet couldst thou but think of giving me back that love, of which this false Sir Walter so wickedly robbed me, I might still contrive to stay awhile to help thee to thy revenge."

"My vengeance must be deeply satiated ere any such passion as love can find room in this heart of mine," said the lady, with eyes that darted lightnings. "At this moment it is overcharged with hate, which nothing can diminish till it is poured out in one vast flood of vengeance on those who have produced it. Go then, my good lord, for to that title thy fortune doth now most securely lead; go—and push it boldly on to the pinnacle of that glory to which it so

clearly points. When we meet again, we may have better will, as well as better leisure, to unfold our mutual thoughts and wishes. Meanwhile, believe that mine are ever for thy welfare, and for that honourable advancement to thee, to which the elegance of thy person, as well as thy superiority in mind and manners, doth so well and amply entitle thee."

"Thanks, lady! thy discernment is great and penetrating!" cried Cochran, whose vanity was so blown up by her extravagant praises of him, that, ere she wist, he, by way of an act of gallantry, and in a manner quite suited to the vulgarity of his character, threw his great coarse arms around her delicate neck, and snatched a rude embrace. But though it brought the colour indignantly into her face, she had too much cunning to resent it.

When Sir Walter Stewart returned home that evening, Cochran told him that he could be his guest no longer, seeing that he had received certain communications from his Majesty, which demanded his immediate departure from Drummin for the court. Sir Walter was by no means

much afflicted at this intelligence. He exerted himself, however, to do Cochran all manner of hospitality, and to shew him every kindness, and every mark of respect in his power, ere he went. He arose early next morning, therefore, to perform the last duties of a host to a parting guest, and, after Cochran and his escort were mounted, he walked by the side of the architect's horse, talking with him by way of civil convoy, for more than a mile of the road, as in those days it was the usual custom of all hosts to do. As they were going up a little hill above Drummin, called the Calton, they espied a hawk perched upon the very top of a tall tree. Sir Walter had a birding piece in his hand, with which he had been for some time wont to practise.

"There is a fine fair shot for thee to try thy new-fangled weapon against, Sir Walter," said Cochran, pointing to the hawk; "I wager thee five gold pieces that thou canst not bring him down."

"The distance is great," said Sir Walter, pointing his piece at the bird; "but I accept your wager."

" He is safe," said Cochran.

" No !" cried Sir Walter exultingly, after discharging his piece, the bullet from which brought the bird fluttering to the ground. " He's gone, an' he were a king !"

" A good shot, truly !" said Cochran, treasuring up Sir Walter's careless expression for his own future use and purpose. " Marry, but that is a dangerous piece of thine, Sir Knight. Take good care how you handle it, else may it perchance do thee a mischief. But I will keep thee no longer trudging thus by my horse's side ; so again I bid thee commend me to thy lady." And so saying, he rode away more abruptly than might have very well beseemed any man of better breeding.

Cochran finished his journey to Stirling, where the King then was, and immediately presented himself at court. He was gratified by the reception he met with from James, who manifested no little joy at the return of his creature. But all mankind are misers, when taking account of the favours of the great, on whom they depend. Unmindful of the large ones they receive them-

selves, they look only with envious eyes on those, however small, that may be bestowed upon others. Thus it was with the unrighteous Haman, and thus it was with Cochran ; for, all the kindness which the King showed to him, in this his first interview, became as nothing, when weighed against the eagerness which his Majesty manifested in his inquiries after Sir Walter Stewart. These were as gall and verjuice to Cochran. In vain did he try to make trifling and oblique insinuations against the Knight of Stradawn, his royal master was in no humour to listen to them at the time, and they were each of them in succession lost to his ear, in the eagerness with which he put his next question. James put question after question as to all the particulars of his occupation at Drummin, as well as regarding the progress of the work, and it was only when he had come down to the day of his departure, that the insidious favourite contrived to catch the royal attention, by relating the story of the birding-piece.

" Sir Walter Stewart is undoubtedly a pretty gentleman, and of very various accomplishment,"

said Cochran, "Aye, and few know his qualifications better than he does himself."

"He knows not his own accomplishments better than we do," replied the King, in rather a dissatisfied tone.

"Pardon me," replied Cochran, obsequiously, "I never ventured to say that he was vain of them. But your Majesty's perception and judgment are unrivalled. Yet much as you have seen and observed of Sir Walter Stewart, I may venture to question, whether you have chanced to witness aught of his great skill and marvellous accuracy of eye in shooting with a birding-piece?"

"A birding-piece!" exclaimed the King, "we knew not that he ever used any such new-fashioned tool."

"He hath not used it till of late," said Cochran; "but it would seem that he hath lost no time in perfecting himself in the use of it, now that he hath taken it in hand. Your Majesty would be surprised to behold how expertly he can employ it. The last shot I saw him make with it was just as we were about to

part, and it astonished me and all those who were in my company."

"We shall ourselves see him use this strange weapon, the very first visit he may make to court," said the King. "But what of this famous shot of his?"

"So please your Majesty, a sparrow-hawk sat on the very top of a straight upright pine tree, of immense height. He was perched there so proudly and confidently in his lofty position, and, as he thought, so safely too, that he looked down as carelessly on our cavalcade below as if he had been the weather-cock on the needle point of some lofty church-spire.—'There's a shot for you, Sir Walter,' said I, and I straightway offered to gage five gold unicorns that he could do nought against it.—'I take thy wager,' said he; and with that he raised his piece, and without saying a word more, he presented it at the over-confident bird, and, to the astonishment of all present, down it came tumbling.—'He's gone!' cried he."

"Aye, and your gold was gone too," interrupted James, laughing heartily.

" Nay, your Majesty, I minded not my gold," replied the wily Cochran ; " and had but these words of his been all the speech he uttered, I had been well contented to have lost a larger wager."

" What said he else?" demanded James.

" So please your most gracious Majesty, I had rather leave the rest unsaid," replied Cochran, with great affectation of discretion.

" Nay, but we would hear it all from thee," cried the King, impatiently.

" If your most gracious Majesty commands, your faithful servant must obey," replied Cochran. " Yet true as mine ears are wont to be to their office, I could hardly believe that I heard the words which they then conveyed to me."

" We would have thee keep us no longer in suspense," cried the King. " What words did Sir Walter Stewart utter?"

" As the bird fell," replied Cochran, with a gravity and a seriousness of aspect that would have seemed to imply a heavy charge against the Knight of Stradawn, " As the bird fell, Sir Walter, as I have already signified to your

Majesty, exclaimed, ' He's gone !' and then turning aside, he added, in a somewhat lower voice, ' *He's gone !—Would he were the King !*' So, and please your Majesty, did mine ears report his words."

" Ha !" exclaimed James, with an air of great dissatisfaction, " Ar't sure that he so spake ? From all that thou hast seen, as well as heard at Drummin, it would seem to us that both thine eyes and thine ears have been wonderfully sharp to pick up evil against Sir Walter Stewart. Was it likely that he should have thus wantonly spouted forth foul treason in the ears of so many witnesses, some of whom it would appear were sufficiently willing to report to us whatever might be turned to his prejudice ?—Go to, sir ! I like not this ! Those accurate ears of thine must have failed of their honest duty for once. Or if, for some object of thine own, thou hadst wilfully misinterpreted that which they did truly hear, we can tell thee that thou hast not hit thy mark with the same skill or success that Sir Walter Stewart did his. But we shall judge of him in person, and that right speedily,

for already hath he received our royal command, borne to him by an especial messenger, to present himself at court by a certain day, in order to be present at the grand tournament which it is our royal will to hold, that we may for once essay to bring our sullen and iron-sinewed nobles around us."

"I humbly crave your Majesty's most gracious pardon," said Cochran, much abashed, and with a cringing reverence. "Your Majesty's matchless wisdom hath put this matter into so clear a light, that I begin to believe that my doubts—I mean the strong doubts I entertained of it at the time—were correct, and that the words must have some how or other come to mine ear awry. I appeal to all the Saints, and to the blessed Virgin to boot, that I would rather hide than publish aught against any one so much in your Majesty's favour as Sir Walter Stewart would seem to be, especially one for whom I have, as I may say, so high a respect, and regard, and admiration."

"We are satisfied," replied the King. "'Tis clear, that in this instance thine ears have

deceived thee. None but one demented could have so spoken in such hearing; and Sir Walter Stewart is no madman. But we would talk no more of this. We would now confer with thee as to those plans at which we last looked ere thou wentest.——"

"I will go seek them straightway, your most gracious Majesty," replied Cochran, and making more than ordinarily low and fawning obeisances, he gladly retired to breathe more freely, and to recover from the alarm of that danger which his very unwonted imprudence had brought upon him, and which had so nearly hurled him into the very pit which he had digged for another.

But we must now return to Drummin.——. Though the———

AN OLD FRIEND WITH A NEW FACE.

GRANT.—Who, in the name of wonder, can that be, who knocks so loudly at the outer door, in this lone place, at such an hour?

SERJEANT.—Some belated drover, I'll warrant. What an awful night the poor man has had to travel in!

CLIFFORD.—If there be, as philosophers say, no happiness equal to that of being relieved from misery, I think that he who knocks, whoever he may be, is to be envied for the sudden transition he is about to make from all the horrors of night, rain, tempest, and bogs, and swollen burns, to the comforts of this room, such as they are, and especially to this glorious fire.

AUTHOR.—What a time they are losing in letting him in !

SERJEANT.—I suspect they will have enough ado to get the door opened, without being knocked down by the blast.

AUTHOR.—They have let him in at last. Whoever he may be, we must make room for the poor fellow at our fireside.

GRANT.—Certainly ; I'll go and bring him in here : nay, I see I need not, for here he comes.

CLIFFORD.—What a figure the poor man is ! He looks like a newly landed river-god, or like Behemoth himself, come forth from the mighty deeps.

SERJEANT.—Whoever he may be, his own father could not know him, were he to see him at this moment, with his whole clothes so bedraggled, and that face of his so clatched up with moss-dirt, that not a feature of it can be seen.

CLIFFORD.—He is like a moving peat-bog, I declare.

AUTHOR.—Bless me, how the poor wretch shivers!

SERJEANT.—He shakes as if he had an ague-fit.

CLIFFORD.—'Tis absolutely like an earthquake shaking the globe.—Here, sir; pray swallow some of this warm punch—it will bring life into you.

STRANGER—(*in a perfect palsy of cold.*)—Och! it's most reveeving indeed, though the taste of it is just altogether poisoned with the moss that 's in my mouth.

CLIFFORD—(*with astonishment.*)—Mr. Macpherson!

AUTHOR.—Is it possible?

GRANT.—Where, in the name of all goodness, can you have dropped from, my worthy sir?

CLIFFORD.—Though we know not where he has dropped from, we may see plainly enough, from the foul streams that drop from him, that he has dropped himself, head over heels, into some black peat-hag. Here—get towels, that we may rub the dirt out of his eyes.

DOMINIE.—Ech, sirs! give me another drop

of yon comfortable stuff, and let me see a bit glisk of the fire.—Aye.—Hech me! I'm much the better of that.

Clifford.—Sit down here, sir. Sit down in this chair close to the fire; but first take off that streaming coat of thine. It reminds me of some of those vast black Highland mosses, the very drainings of which give origin to some dozen of rivers. Now, take another pull at this hot stuff, and then tell us your adventures if you can.

Dominie.—Oh, dear me, that is good! Why, gentlemen, my story is short, though my way has been long and weary enough. The fack is, that when I got to my brother Ewan's house, I found that he was away to the low country to make some bargain about the buying of a stock of iron, and that he was not to be home again for a fortnight. You may believe I was much disappointed at this intelligence, after the long tramp I had all the way from Caithness, to come and see him. But it would appear, that my letter to him must have somehow miscarried. Be that as it may, I had no sooner been satisfied that I had no chance of seeing Ewan for a

time, than my heart began to yearn after those with whom I had so lately and so sorrowfully parted. So, thinks I to myself, I'll just take my foot in my hand, and after the gentlemen. I'll catch them at Inchrory. If the night had been good and clear, I should have been here good two hours ago. But on came the tempest; and the wind, and the rain, and the darkness together, so bamboozled and dumbfounded me, that, as I was fighting along with might and main, I fell souse over head and ears into a deep peat-pot,

Instabilis tellus, innabilis unda,

out of which it is the mercy of Providence that I was at length able to swatter, after dooking and diving in it like a wild-duck for the better part of a quarter of an hour, till I was nearly drowned in clean mud.

Clifford. — Clean mud, Mr. Macpherson! The mud you have been in would seem to me to have been anything but clean.

Dominie.—True, Mr. Clifford; but I used a phrase of our vernacular, meaning that there was nothing else there but mud—a truth I can

speak to by having gone faithfully throughout every corner of the big hole into which I fell without finding any.—Clean, truly!—such a fearsome sight I am!—I declare I am worse than Serjeant John Smith must have been, when he fell into the moss-hole about the time of the battle of Culloden.—Would you like to hear that story, gentlemen?

CLIFFORD.—Much, Mr. Macpherson, but not now, for several reasons. First, we must contrive to get you into dry clothes of some sort, to prevent your dying of cold or fever; secondly, you must have something to eat before you are permitted to talk; and thirdly, there is another Serjeant, one Serjeant Archy Stewart, who is at this moment on duty, and who was in the middle of a long story when your appearance interrupted him. We must have that out first; but, in my capacity of secretary, I shall take care to book you for producing your Serjeant John Smith, when his time comes in the roster.

DOMINIE.—Eh, I'm sorry that I should have stopped the flow of my friend Serjeant Archy's narration.

CLIFFORD.—How could it have been otherwise, my good man? Why, what flow could have possibly stood against such a flow as that which now streams from your wet garments, Mr. Macpherson? You have already made a lake in the room.

DOMINIE.—Keep me, so I have!

SERJEANT.—Here lassie! Bring cloths and swab up the floor.

CLIFFORD.—You had better not sit longer in that condition, Mr. Macpherson; come away with me up to the garret, where we are to sleep, and then I shall go and see what I can prevail on Mrs. Shaw to do for you, to rig you out.

There was a waggish twinkle in Clifford's eye, as he left the room with Mr. Macpherson. They were not long gone, and when they did return, our young friend appeared leading in the Dominie, clad in a short-gown, and a blue flannel petticoat, both belonging to our hostess. The Scottish garment called the short-gown, is a sort of loose jacket, covering one half the

person only, and when tied tight round the waist, it is admirably calculated to show off the mould of a handsome woman to the best advantage. On the present occasion, it was with some difficulty confined round the bulky Dominie, by a red cotton handkerchief, so as fully to display his shape; and as the petticoat reached but a little way below his knees, it exhibited the full proportions of his Herculean legs, enlarged as they were by a pair of the thickest grey worsted hose, and brogues of enormous size, accidentally left there by a Highland drover. Over his head was placed one of Mrs. Shaw's tartan shawls, which Clifford had recommended to be tied under his chin, as a precaution against toothach, to which he declared himself to be frequently a martyr. Such a woman, as the Dominie appeared to make, is never to be seen on the face of this earth, except in some exaggerated specimen of those marine, or rather amphibious animals, to be found on the sea-coasts of Britain, and which are called bathing women.

We were all so much taken by surprise with his appearance, that to control our laughter was a matter of utter impossibility.

CLIFFORD.—Gentlemen, allow me to introduce to you the great Princess Rustifusti.

DOMINIE—(*striding in like a Grenadier.*)—Truly, gentlemen, I am ashamed to appear among you in this unbecoming disguise. But my worthy and kind friend Mr. Clifford is so careful of me—mercy on me, what would my boys say if they beheld me?

GRANT.—They would be astonished, no doubt, Mr. Macpherson. But come, sit down—here is something comfortable for you to eat. I am sure you must require food by this time.

DOMINIE.—I must honestly confess to you that I am downright ravenous.

CLIFFORD.—Nay, now, do not disgrace the delicate feminine character which you are at present supporting, by eating like a masculine creature.

DOMINIE.—Masculine, feminine, or neuter, I am so famished, that I must eat liker, I fear,

unto a male wolf, than a delicate leddy, such as fortune has this night forced me to represent.

CLIFFORD. Nay, then, if that be your way, I must cease to be your chaperon. So do you take charge of your own delicate self, and go on, if you must do so, to disgrace the lovely sex to which you now belong, by your immoderate eating and drinking, whilst I call upon Serjeant Archy Stewart to proceed with his narrative.

THE LEGEND OF CHARLEY STEWART TÀILLEAR-CRUBACH CONTINUED.

ALTHOUGH the jealous dreamings of King James had led him rather to desire the absence of Sir Walter Stewart from his court, whilst the Knight was yet a bachelor, he was no sooner fairly married, than all such fancies were dissipated from the royal mind. The renewed enjoyment in Sir Walter's society, which the monarch had experienced, previous to the departure of the newly married pair for Stradawn, only served to render the after absence of his favourite the more insufferable, and he soon began to weary for the return of so accomplished a companion. Sir Walter had sufficient opportunity of being rendered sensible of the satisfactory alteration in the King's manner towards him, before he left the court; but, notwith-

standing all this, he was in no small degree surprised, as well as delighted, with the arrival of the special messenger, who was the bearer of the royal command for him, to attend his Majesty at the tournament, which reached him the very day after Cochran had left him. Sir Walter being one of the best equestrians of his time, he was naturally extremely fond of horses. His great passion was to possess himself of the most beautiful steeds that could possibly be procured, and he spared neither pains nor expense in the gratification of this knight-like fancy. Some time before the period we are now speaking of, he chanced to have acquired some piebald horses, which were of a white colour, marked in a very extraordinary manner with large patches of a sort of bluish tinge. This circumstance led him to indulge the whim of collecting more of the same description, and having, from time to time, procured individual animals, from all quarters, and a considerable addition to their numbers having recently arrived, he now at length found himself enabled to mount a large troop of his attendants on

creatures of a similar description, and of the most exquisite symmetry of form. Prepared as he thus happened to be, the news of the tournament gave him particular gratification. His heart exulted, and his mind was all agog, at the prospect of such an opportunity of making so marvellous a display, before a more numerous, as well as more experienced, collection of eyes, than his own glens could afford him. Accordingly, he began to busy himself, without loss of time, in making those arrangements, which were necessary to enable him to appear with that degree of splendour, which he always wished to exhibit on such occasions. Mr. Jonathan Junkins, and all the tailors for many miles round, were put in requisition to make rich housings, and footmantles of scarlet cloth for the saddles, and everything else was got up in a proportionable style of splendour. But let us not imagine that this, his so minute attention to such fopperies, should lower Sir Walter Stewart in our opinion, for we must remember, that all such trifles, being integral parts of chivalry, assumed the greatest

importance in the eyes of every knight. For many reasons, Sir Walter Stewart felt no great desire to take his wife with him to court, but he could find no good plea for leaving her behind. Amongst other preparations, therefore, the lady's horse litter required to be new furbished up, seeing that she was now in a condition that made riding somewhat dangerous; but so great was the expedition used by all hands, that by the day previous to that fixed for departure, all the horses were duly trained, and all their equipments, as well as those for the men-at-arms, and all other things necessary for his expedition, were in the highest order.

Sir Walter Stewart retired to rest that night with the intention of being up with the earliest dawn, that he might himself see that nothing had been forgotten. Upon reaching his lady's apartment, he found no one with her but her page, English Tomkins, as he was familiarly called. This was a boy of great beauty of countenance, and of an intelligence of eye very superior to that which his years might have promised. He had followed the lady from England, and he

was so strongly attached to his mistress, that, if he was at all deep in her confidence, he had prudence enough to keep all that he knew, strictly secret from every one with whom his situation brought him into contact. To all, except to her, he was reserved and distant, to an extent much beyond that, which might have been looked for from the natural carelessness and ingenuousness of youth, and even the good-humoured freedom which Sir Walter used with him, was never successful in breaking through the parchment case in which he seemed to wrap himself up. He was a most impenetrable youth, and no long time elapsed after the Knight's marriage, before Sir Walter began to look upon the boy with a certain jealousy, and dislike, which he could neither account for nor overcome.

"Do it thine own way," said the lady to him with so great earnestness in her communication with him, that she perceived not Sir Walter's entrance. "Do it thine own way, I tell thee, boy; but see that it be done, and that surely, and secretly too—for I could have no will to leave Drummin, and no heart to enjoy the pleasures of

the Court, unless I knew that this was done ere I went."

"What may this be, upon which so much of thy happiness depends?" demanded Sir Walter Stewart, advancing.

"Holy Virgin, what a start you gave me!" cried the lady; "such puerile tricks are hardly worthy of thee."

"What tricks?" asked the Knight, with utter simplicity.

"Such boyish tricks, I tell thee," said the lady, smoothing her angry countenance, and throwing over it a playful smile, and at the same time gently tapping his cheek, as if in the most perfect good humour. "I mean such boyish tricks as that which thou hast now used, by stealing thus to my chamber, and secreting thyself, that thou mightest startle me for thine idle amusement."

"Credit me, I am no such idle boy as thou wouldst suppose," said Sir Walter, gravely; "I have been guilty of no such silly conduct. I came, as I am ever wont to do, without either the intent or the thought of surprising thee.

Nay, I knew not that I had done so, until thou didst utter that scream of surprise."

" Well, well, I believe thee," said the lady ; " and if thou hadst stolen upon my privacy, thou couldst have gained nothing that would have amounted to treason, seeing that I was but cautioning Tomkins here, as to how he should execute a small deed of charity for me, ere we go to-morrow, which I could ill brook the neglect of. Now, boy, thou may'st go," continued the lady; " And see that thou doest my bidding to the very letter."

" Your commands shall be strictly obeyed, lady," said the boy, bowing as he retired.

The apartment in which the Knight and his lady slept had a window in it which looked down the vale, formed by the combined waters of the Aven and the Livat. A faint but glowing red light shot through this window towards morning, and falling upon Sir Walter Stewart's eyes, gradually unsealed their lids from the deep sleep in which they were closed. He started up at this appearance of approaching sunrise—hurried on his clothes, and hastened down stairs to the

court-yard. There he found the men-at-arms, who had the watch, all at their posts; but none of the grooms, or the others whom he had expected to have found already busied with their preparations, were as yet astir. Having expressed his surprise at their laziness, he learned from those on guard, that it yet wanted two good hours of day. Being unwilling to retire again to his chamber, he walked forth beyond the walls, to the terrace on which the castle stands; and he had no sooner got there, than the cause of this his premature disturbance was made sufficiently manifest to him, for his eyes were immediately caught, and his attention fearfully arrested, by a column of fire that shot up from the cottage of Alice Asher, and inflamed the very clouds above.

Giving one loud shout of alarm to the people within the castle walls, he staid not for them, but rushed franticly down the green slope, and crossing a rustic foot-bridge that spanned the river Livat, immediately under the fortalice, he flew towards the wooded hill, too accurately guided through the obscurity of the night, by

the conflagration, the light from which blazed in his eyes. But whilst it thus served to direct him towards its object, it had also the effect of dazzling his vision ; so that, in the furious precipitation of his speed, he ran against some living being that was coming hurriedly in the opposite direction. Whatever it might be, his force was so tremendous, that he drove it aside from the path, like a ball from a bat, and then rolling forwards on the ground himself, and over and over, he lay for some moments senseless upon the grass. But, having soon afterwards recovered himself, he sprang again to his legs, and, his whole thoughts being absorbed at the moment by his agonizing anxiety for Alice Asher's safety, he stopped not to enquire what had become of the individual who had produced his accident, but rushed on again towards the burning house, on which he still kept his eyes fixed. Long ere he gained the foot of the hill on which it stood, a momentary depression of the flame, followed by an equally sudden and very great increase of it, told him that the roof had fallen in, and that, if the inmates had not already fled

for safety, they must now be beyond all reach of assistance. Yet still he paused not; but, doubling his speed, he rushed breathless up through the wood on the side of the hill, and at length arrived at the cottage.

What a sad spectacle did it now present! The walls alone were standing, like a huge grate, in which the inflammable materials of the heather-thatched roof, and the furniture, and interior wood-work, were rapidly consuming. The roses and woodbines that crept over the walls, or trailed in rude luxuriance over the porch, were now shrivelled up and scorched by the intense heat within, nay, even the shrubs and flowers that grew around, were dried up and killed by it.

"Oh, Holy Virgin Mother, she is gone! she is gone!" cried Sir Walter, giving way to a paroxysm of grief.

And now people came running together from the nearest cottages. Eagerly did he enquire of all he met for some information, regarding Alice Asher; but no one could tell him aught of her. The men from the Castle came crowding up the hill, bearing buckets of water. These were now

useless. But still Sir Walter called on those who carried them to exert themselves, and, urged by his commands, they ran to and from a neighbouring pool, bearing water, and pouring it over the sinking flames, till they were finally extinguished, at least so far, that they were enabled to rake amid the red-hot embers with long poles, without danger to themselves. With what torturing anxiety did Sir Walter Stewart stand, in the hope that no human remains would be found, by which circumstance he expected to satisfy himself that Alice Asher had escaped. But, alas! they had not searched far, when they found a body, or rather a half-consumed skeleton, in so fearful a state of mutilation, that although its size left no doubt that it was that of a woman, it was quite impossible to guess at the person. Sir Walter was frantic. But still hope lingered within his bosom. Alice had a servant maid in the house. This skeleton was nearer, as he thought, to the size of the woman, than to that of the mistress. Besides, these remains were found in a part of the house which this attendant inhabited. No doubt was left that they were

hers; and Sir Walter's heart expanded with the temporary relief which it experienced.

But the search went on. And now Sir Walter Stewart's heart again fluttered betwixt torturing hope and fear,—till,—oh, wretched and bitterly afflicting sight! in that part of the cottage which Alice Asher more particularly occupied, another half-consumed body was found. This was also that of a woman; and, as it corresponded accurately to the size of her about whose fate he was so unhappily interested, every spark of hope was at once extinguished within him. His brain whirled in strange and bewildering confusion. He gasped for breath, and seemed to swallow down liquid fire; all consciousness left him for a time; and he sank down on an adjacent bank in a temporary fainting fit.

I shall not attempt to describe the flood of strong and resistless feeling to which Sir Walter Stewart, resolute as he might be, was compelled to give way, when his senses fully returned to him. Those who were around him respected them in silence. The sun soon afterwards arose

upon the melancholy scene; and then it was that the brave Knight's countenance was observed by all, to bear powerfully-written testimony of the deep grief that had been at work upon it. Making a strong and manly effort to subdue his affliction, he gave orders to his people to see that the remains, now so revolting to look upon, should be properly attended to; and, despatching a confidential person to the priest who had acted as father-confessor to Alice Asher, he besought him to do all that might be requisite to ensure that the last sad duties should be decently and reverentially paid, and every religious rite duly performed to her, whose life of contrition, and penitence, for a sin which he felt to have been his alone, had so fair a prospect of reconciling her to her Maker. And, having made these arrangements, he slowly and silently, and with a sorrowful, heavy, and lacerated heart, bent his steps back to Drummin.

When Sir Walter Stewart, and those who were with him, had reached the place where he had been so unaccountably thrown down, he was surprised to see a human figure lying a

few yards off the footpath, with the head and shoulders crammed into a thicket. On approaching it, the dress at once informed him that it was his lady's page, English Tomkins. Having ordered some of his people to pull him forth from the bushes in which he was half hid, and to raise him up, he was discovered to be quite dead ;— and his death was at once seen to have been occasioned, by his head having come against the thick and knotty trunk of an oak, which grew up from amidst the black thorns and honeysuckles, so that his skull had been dreadfully fractured, and instant extermination of life had ensued.

" Jesus have mercy on me !" cried Sir Walter, with great feeling. " I have been the innocent cause of this poor boy's death, by running against him in the dark ;" and having said so, he proceeded to explain to his poople the circumstances which had produced and attended the accident.

" Methinks he hardly merits to be much wailed for, Sir Knight, unless thou canst say that these strange articles can have been inno-

cently carried by him," said one of the attendants, pulling, at the same time, from the bosom of the corpse, a small bundle of matches, and a tinder-box, with a flint and steel.—Marry, these would seem to say, that he had been better employed had he been in his bed."

"What do I see?" cried Sir Walter Stewart, filled with horror, and greatly agitated.—"What! was it murder then?—murder of the most horrible description? Oh, holy Mother of God, can there be such villainy upon earth?"

"What shall we do with this wretched carcass," demanded one of the people.

"Oh, most unlucky accident!" cried Sir Walter, without heeding him.—"Would that I had but caught him in life! But, alas! strong as suspicion is against him, his secret has died with him! We cannot now wrench forth the truth from him either by spring or by screw. He is gone to his account, before that Judge, at whose tribunal all secrets must appear. Yet, bear him along with you, and see that you take especial care to preserve those dumb instances

of his hellish art, till I may require thee to produce them."

Sir Walter Stewart now left his people to carry the body at their own leisure, and shot away ahead of them, at a pace so furious, as to correspond with the violence of those various stormy feelings which then agitated him. On reaching Drummin, he hurried directly to his lady's chamber, where he found her putting the last finish to her travelling dress.

"Madam!" said he to her bower-woman, in a voice which sufficiently betrayed the disturbed state of his mind; "my lady will dispense with thine attendance for a brief space—we would be private."

"What strange conduct is this, Sir Walter?" demanded the lady after her attendant was gone, whilst her voice and manner might have led any one to believe, that she too was not altogether well at ease. "Why shouldst thou have thus sent Jane so rudely forth, when she hath yet so much to pack and to prepare?"

"Because I would fain have some private

converse with thee, lady," said the Knight solemnly.—" Dost thou usually send forth thy page Tomkins on errands of charity so very early as several hours before sunrise?"

" No!—No!" replied the lady in a voice of hesitation. " Such are not indeed,—no, they are not his usual hours to be sent on such errands; but—but—the boy had some distance to go. And then—and—and—and then he hath so much to do ere we depart, that—that—But I wonder much that he is not returning by this time!"

" He is returning now!" said Sir Walter, looking hard and somewhat sternly at her.—" But canst thou tell me what he did with a tinder-box, flint, and steel, and matches, concealed in his bosom?"

" Flin—flint—flint and steel saidst thou?" cried the lady, considerably agitated. " How can I say aught about it? Boys are ever full of tricks, and so, I doubt not, is Tomkins. But what hath he told thee himself? Didst thou not question him?"

"As yet he hath told us nothing," replied the Knight, ambiguously.

"Then all is yet right!" cried the lady, from an energetic impulse of satisfaction, which she could not control.

"What is right?" demanded Sir Walter, sternly.

"I would say that—that—that if the boy hath confessed no evil, then 'tis most likely that no evil hath been done."

"Yea," replied Sir Walter, gravely, and with deep feeling, "but the direst evil hath been done—a deed which is hardly to be matched in cruelty—the firing of the house, and the burning to death of an innocent lady and her woman!"

"An *innocent* lady!" exclaimed his wife, again forgetting herself for a moment. "But thou canst not suspect this boy of having done so foul a deed?"

"Most strongly do I suspect him," replied Sir Walter.

"Nay, nay, 'tis impossible," said the lady. "What could prompt *him* to so horrible an act?"

" What could prompt him!" exclaimed Sir Walter, " nothing, methinks, in his own bosom; but canst thou not guess who could have prompted him?"

" Nay, nay, how could I guess?" said the lady, in great trepidation.

" Lady!" said Sir Walter, with great solemnity, after having seated her in one chair, and drawn one for himself close to her, where he sat for some moments looking steadily into her palid and agitated countenance. " Lady! are these the charitable errands on which thou art wont to send this boy?"

" What mean ye, Sir Walter?" demanded the lady, in a state of trembling and alarm which she could not conceal. " The boy hath not basely accused me of aught."

" Sir Walter, your pardon!" said Jane, the lady's bower woman, bursting at that moment most inopportunely into the room, " Ronald would fain know what you would have done with the corpse of poor Tomkins?"

" The *corpse* of Tomkins!" cried the lady, starting up, and clapping her hands together, in

an ecstacy of joy, which she could not hide. "Then the boy is no longer alive!"

"He was found dead, it seems, my lady," said the maid, "and his corpse hath this moment been brought in by Ronald and the rest. 'Tis fearsome to look upon him. He hath got a deadly contusion and gash on his head."

"Alas, poor boy!" cried the lady, wiping her dry eyes with her pocket handkerchief, and mustering up all the symptoms of sorrow she could command. "Who can have murdered him? I shall never again meet with so faithful a page!"

"Faithful, indeed, madam," said Sir Walter, after showing the maid again out of the room, "faithful, indeed, readily to execute those most wicked and murderous orders with which thou didst charge him."

"Nay, nay, this is too much, Sir Walter," replied the lady, now gaining full boldness and command of herself, from having been thus unexpectedly certified that her page was dead, and that he could now tell no tales; "how canst thou dare to insinuate any thing against me?"

" Madam," said Sir Walter, in a hollow tone, and with considerable agitation of manner, " would it were so that thou couldst with truth speak thus boldly. But, alas ! the words I heard thee utter last night to the page—the horrible catastrophe of this morning—the place where it pleased Providence that he should meet with his accidental death—the direction in which he was running when he received it, and the implements of destruction which were found in his bosom, can leave no rational doubt in my mind as to the person who conceived and directed this most cruel tragedy ; and though evidence may be yet lacking to bring the crime fully home to thee, yet, convinced and satisfied as I am of the justice of this charge against thee, I can no longer suffer the head of so foul a murderess to rest upon this bosom. I leave thee to the stings of thine own conscience, and to that repentance which they may produce, believing that God, in his own good time, will make the truth appear, so that thou mayst be made to expiate thy guilt," and so saying, Sir Walter Stewart left the apartment.

"Leave me to my conscience!" cried the lady, with a laugh of derision, after the door was closed, "my conscience will sit easy enough within me, I trow, since my good fortune hath thus got me so innocently rid of mine instrument, after he had so well worked my will."

Sir Walter's heart was torn by a thousand afflictions. He felt that he would be better any where else than at Drummin. Having now no reliance in the fidelity of his wife, he resolved to leave her behind him, and having hastily packed up the important charters of his lands, and some other valuables, he added them to his other baggage. The time now left was just sufficient to enable him to obey the King's command, to present himself before him on a certain day. His people were all waiting in readiness in the court-yard. Without more thought he flung himself into the saddle, with a bleeding heart. He was distracted by his feelings, but giving the word "*forward!*" he dashed through the gateway at a furious pace, and his troop of men-at-arms and attendants went thundering after him.

Sir Walter Stewart was received in the

kindest manner by both the King and Queen. He was earnestly asked, especially by James, why he had not brought his lady with him. As he could not tell the whole truth, without making a deadly accusation against her, which he had no means of proving, he was compelled to say that he had left her somewhat indisposed, an answer that produced some good humoured raillery from James, delivered in his wonted familiar manner, and left him, for the time at least, sufficiently well satisfied.

The tournament took place in that beautiful tilting-ground, in the rocky valley, close under the south-eastern side of the crag upon which Stirling Castle stands, and which is still pointed out by the citizens of the ancient town, as the place which was so used in those old times. Though few or none of the discontented nobles appeared, it was yet a very glorious spectacle. The singularity and grandeur of Sir Walter Stewart's retinue, and their whole appearance, mounted as they were upon the piebald horses, so richly caparisoned, presented by far the finest feature of the royal procession, and swallowed up every

other theme of conversation. He was now perhaps the only one to whom it gave but little pleasure, heavy as his heart then was.

" We would know from our Queen, who, in her mind, was the prettiest gentleman that appeared at the show to-day," said the King, after all was over, and that he was in private with her.

" How can your Majesty hesitate one moment in coming to a judgment upon so plain and palpable a question?" demanded the Queen, with great animation. " The ornament of the procession and pageant was undoubtedly Sir Walter Stewart. Who was there who came within an hundred degrees of him? The number of his attendants—the beauty of the animals on which they were mounted—creatures that would seem to have been conjured forth out of the land of faery itself—creatures that moved as if formed out of the rarer elements of nature—and then the splendour of their housings—and, above all, the rich and tasteful dress of the handsome and elegant owner of so much bravery, who is so full of grace and skill in the management of his

steed, that he bore off the applause of all eyes and the love of all hearts! But what moves you, my sovereign Lord? Methinks that something hath displeased you?"

"Your praises of Sir Walter Stewart would seem to us to be something extravagant," said the King, considerably disturbed. "Was there no one else there who might have demanded a like portion of your approbation?"

"If your Majesty would have an honest answer from me, I must reply,—no one," said the Queen. "Even the gorgeous and glittering retinue of Cochran, the budding Earl of Mar, who takes upon him as if your Majesty had already dubbed him by that title, was but as gilded clay compared to the well conceived arrangements of the accomplished Sir Walter Stewart, who outshone all others."

"*All* others saidst thou, Margaret? Didst thou not think that we ourselves were of as fair a presence and appearance as thy minion Sir Walter Stewart?" demanded the King, with a pettish and perturbed air and manner.

"Nay, my liege Lord," replied the Queen, very

much distressed to discover that she had thus so innocently offended her husband. " In speaking thus of Sir Walter Stewart, I never dreamed of bringing your royal person, or your royal retinue, into comparison with those of any subject, even with those of Sir Walter Stewart himself, whose individual splendour, was but as a part of that glorious magnificence which was all thine own. Do me not the injustice to judge me so harshly, or so hardly. Could you for one moment suppose that I could compare Sir Walter Stewart to thee, my royal liege and husband? Believe me, that although Sir Walter Stewart is much esteemed by me for his numerous merits, yet he is no minion of mine, and it were equally cruel and unjust in any one to call him so."

" 'Tis at least well to hear thee say so," replied the King, in a sort of half satisfied tone,—and then turning coldly away, he left the apartment, with such an air and manner, that Queen Margaret burst into tears, which it required some thinking and reasoning within herself to enable her to dry up.

Now it was that the facile mind of King

James, became prepared to imbibe all the villanies which the designing Cochran could pour into it. Nay, his Majesty became the voluntary and the willing victim of them. He sent for Cochran, made him recapitulate all the particulars of the story of the hawk, shot with the birding-piece, together with that expression of Sir Walter's which he had formerly so repudiated, but which he now listened to and received as most true and convincing; and the royal ears being thus so unexpectedly open to him, Cochran now scrupled not to tell the King, that, to his certain knowledge, Sir Walter was faithless to his wife. To this story James listened with anxious attention and interest. He remembered the strange combination of Venus with the other planets, and he shuddered at the recollection, as he put it beside his Queen's declared approbation of Sir Walter Stewart. His Majesty's manner towards the Knight became again estranged and cold, and his treatment of him unkind; and this being quickly observed by those sordid and selfish wretches, who, with the sagacity of the sharks that follow a diseased ship,

or the rats that leave one that is no longer sea-worthy, are ever ready to watch and catch at such signs of a courtier's decaying influence, a regular bond of union was formed against him by all but Sir William Rogers, who could by no means be brought to see that he could benefit his niece by the ruin of her husband. This plot went on, for some considerable time, without producing the slightest suspicion on the part of Sir Walter Stewart, though he could not fail to be sufficiently sensible of the King's alienation from him.

He was sitting one night alone in his lodgings, when one, in the habit of a serving-man, was announced to him, as craving for a private audience of him, that he might deliver a particular message to him from a gentleman of the court. Having ordered him to be admitted, he was surprised to see enter a person who appeared to be a stranger to him, with a light handsome figure, but having a nose of most unnatural length, hugeness, and redness. He examined him narrowly, yet he still remained satisfied that he had never seen any such person before; but

they were no sooner left alone, than the stranger began to speak, and Sir Walter recognised him immediately.

" Trust me, Stewart, it is not without some personal risk that I have thus adventured to hold communication with thee," said the stranger.

" Ramsay!" exclaimed Sir Walter Stewart, in amazement. " In such a disguise as this, I should never have discovered thee, but for thy voice,"

" Then must I take care to keep that under," said Ramsay, in a half whisper. " But time is precious. Thy life is sought for! To-morrow, nay, even an hour hence, all attempt to escape may be unavailing, and I, even I, may suffer for this my attempt to save a friend."

" I well know the danger that attends such a duty," said Sir Walter, " and I would not for worlds that thou shouldst incur it."

" Aye, there thou hast said it," replied Ramsay. " I know well enough what thou wouldst hint at,—thy service to Albany! Nay, start not! Thy secret will never be the worse for

me. But, nevertheless, that is one of the suspicions that is harboured against thee."

"Suspicions!" exclaimed Sir Walter, "What suspicions?"

"In the first place, the King hath taken up a jealousy against thee regarding the Queen," replied Ramsay. "Then some strange story hath reached his ears from Cochran, who, by the way, hath been this day created Earl of Mar, regarding some treasonable words thou didst drop in his hearing in the shooting of a hawk with a birding-piece. Besides this, Torfefan, the master of fence, hath said, that thou didst once step in to save the Earl of Huntly from his just vengeance, for speaking treasonably of the King and his courtiers; whence it is argued, that thou art in secret league with the discontented nobles. This is corroborated by that rascal, Hommil, the tailor, who says he was with Torfefan at the time. To this accusation, touching thy consorting with the nobles, Andrew, the Astrologer, bears his support, for he says that he one night found thee and the Earl

in deep conference, alone in the hostel. And, finally, as I have already hinted, thou art, somehow or other, shrewdly suspected of having aided in, if not contrived the escape of the Duke of Albany from Edinburgh Castle. But besides all this, Sir William Rogers, who hath been long thy friend, hath at last gone over to those who are malecontent with thee, because he hath had letters from his niece, complaining that she had been disgracefully and cruelly treated by thee, and that, too, but a few days before she gave birth to thy son and heir; and that, in consequence of this thine evil treatment of her, she hath applied for divorce from thee. But what is all this, and why should I waste time in such a recapitulation of forgeries? Thy life, my dear Stewart, is sought for! Ere to-morrow's dawn thou wilt be a prisoner, and how soon afterwards thou mayest be numbered with the dead, the fate of the last Mar may teach thee. Fly then, my dear friend, for thy life! I dare not tarry here longer. Get into thy saddle with all manner of haste, and see that thou sparest not

thy spurs ! And so God give thee good speed till we meet in better times."

Ramsay gave him a warm embrace, and then hurried out of the room and the house. And Sir Walter Stewart, after packing up his writings and other valuables, cautiously and quietly summoned his people, and, getting into their saddles, they rode slowly out of the gate of the town, and across the ancient bridge over the river Forth, the guards readily believing them when they said they were bound on the King's business. But they no sooner found themselves on the wide and flat carse-lands to the north of the river Forth, than they made the hoofs of their steeds thunder across them with the rapid sweep of a whirlwind. Nor was this more than necessary either, for the distant shouts of people, and the trampling of horses in pursuit, were heard behind them. But the darkness of that night enabled them to throw them off, and, by forced journies, they in a few days reached Huntly Castle, where they were joyfully and hospitably received by Sir Walter's friend the

Earl. Although the people who pursued them very soon returned without success, they were enabled to carry back certain information as to Sir Walter Stewart's place of retreat; and this was no sooner known, than the newly made Earl of Mar, armed with the Royal authority, dispatched an especial messenger, upon a fleet horse, to go directly to Drummin, as the bearer of certain royal letters to the Lady of Stradawn, together with a private communication from himself, which was conceived in these terms:—

"To the Lady Juliet Manvers, once called the Lady Stradawn, these, with speed.

"Most beauteous Lady, and my soul's idol! Thou wilt herewith receive the dispensation of his Holiness Pope Sixtus the Fourth, annulling thy marriage with that traitor, Sir Walter Stewart of Stradawn, so that thou mayest now look forward to be speedily raised to the high title and dignity of Countess of Mar, as well as to those yet more elevated honours, to which the growing edifice of my fortunes may yet uplift thee. But enough of this for the present.

All will depend on thine own brave and steady deportment. Thou hast herewith sent thee, moreover, the King's royal letters, strictly enjoining thee to defend the Castle of Drummin against all comers, and to hold it for his sovereign Majesty; and, above all, on no account to admit the traitor, Sir Walter Stewart, within its walls; the which, seeing that I built and repaired them, I full well know, are stout enough to resist any engine which he or others may be able to bring against them, when defended by so bold a heart as thine. To aid thee in this, and to enable thee to control the rebellious vassals of the Strath, a picked body of men are already on their march, and will be with thee in a very few days after these presents come to thy hand. So use thine authority like one who is destined to the great honours that await thee, and thus show thyself worthy of him who is the architect of thy fortunes,—who is thy devoted adorer and slave, the deeply love-stricken

"MAR."

Of all this the gallant Sir Walter knew no-

thing, save that the proclamation of his being declared traitor, and the public annunciation of the dissolution of his marriage had been so generally diffused, that they came to him through the thousand mouths of common fame.

It was this last piece of intelligence, that made him gather up his strength, from that dejection to which he had for sometime been disposed to yield. The very thought that his alliance with this now detested woman, was thus severed and annihilated for ever, gave him new life. But, alas! the recollection that she to whose wrongs, to whose sorrows, and to whose penitence, he would now have wished to have held out the right hand of consolation, was now no longer in life to receive it, gave him fresh pangs of grief and despondency. He was resolved, however, to proceed to dispossess the murderess from the hearth of his fathers, and to take possession of his own fortress, in defiance of the King's proclamation, being well aware that the same stout hands, and sharp claymores, in Stradawn, which had ever proved so faithful to him, would still enable him, if once in possession of his little

place of strength, to laugh at all the King's heralds and parchments throughout broad Scotland.

It was after a long and tedious march, that Sir Walter Stewart and his followers were seen winding up the valley of the Aven, one beautiful afternoon. The shouts of the thinly scattered population, rang through the woods from cottage to cottage, as the news spread that their own knight and chieftain was returning. All turned out, and crowded after him, to welcome himself, to talk with their friends in the ranks of his retinue, and to glut their eyes with the splendid pageant presented to them by his gallant array, and his richly caparisoned piebald horses. The castle arose before them upon its level and elevated green terrace, and his troop was moving slowly forward to ford the river Livat, where it runs in a broad and shallow stream, along the base of the promontory on which the fortress stands, when they, and especially their horses, were suddenly startled by the loud roar of a falconet, fired from the walls, the echo from which ran thundering along the faces

of the neighbouring mountains, whilst the bullet discharged from it whistled over their heads, and went crashing through the boughs of a great tree behind them. A small plump of spears appeared immediately afterwards without the walls, and ranged themselves along the edge of the terrace above. But although somewhat surprised by these warlike and hostile demonstrations, Sir Walter moved boldly onwards to the river side.

"Whosoever thou beest, thou hast already had one warning," cried a loud and hoarse voice from amid the spearmen on the terrace. "I bid thee beware of a second, till we know something of thee and of thy folk."

"We would hold parley," replied the Knight. "Friends, ye know not whom ye war against. Is Sir Walter Stewart to be held as an enemy before his own Castle of Drummin?"

"We know naught of Sir Walter," shouted the other. "We know not Sir Walter Stewart, nay, nor any other Stewart, save our liege lord and master, James Stewart, the third of

that name, King of Scotland, in whose name we bid thee be warned and keep off."

"Who is he who so rudely challenges the Castle of Drummin?" exclaimed a shrill woman's voice from the walls. "If any one would have peaceful speech of us, let him advance with a moderate escort till he comes within earshot."

"By'r Lady, I would have thee beware, Sir Knight," said Ronald, the especial esquire of Sir Walter's body. "If thou art bold enough to go nearer, thou mayest come within something more than earshot. I will advance and hold parley with them, and I shall be safe enow too, for they will see that they can make nothing by any deed of traitorie done against such an one as me."

"No, no, Ronald; I will take my chance," said Sir Walter in a melancholy tone. "My life is now but of little value to me. Let you and one more go with me, and let the rest stand fast here till we return to them."

Sir Walter Stewart and his two attendants now separated from their party—forded the

river, and rode their horses up the steep diagonal path that led up to the terrace on the promontory, whilst the plump of spearmen were called in, and the gates closed. On the outer wall of the barbican stood the lady of Stradawn, with her baby in her arms, and surrounded by a group of faces which were altogether strange to the Knight, or those who were with him.

"How comes it, lady, that I, Sir Walter Stewart, the rightful owner of this castle of Drummin, should be thus delayed in entering within mine own walls?" demanded the Knight. "Give orders that instant entrance may be yielded to me and mine, that there may be no unseemly warring and blood between those who, if no longer one flesh, were at least once so united by the holy church."

"I no longer know Sir Walter Stewart!" cried the lady, in a lofty and imperious tone and manner. "I had indeed once the misfortune to be linked to him, of which union behold the sad fruits in this wretched babe! But my duty to my Sovereign, as well as my duty to the Earl of Mar, who is soon to be my husband,

requires that I should now know him no longer, save as a traitor to his King, as well as a traitor to me—alike disloyal to both. Begone, then! This fortalice is now held by me for James Third, King of Scotland, and entrance herein thou shalt never have, whilst I live to bar thee out."

"Lady, thou art bold," replied Sir Walter, coolly, "but remember, that stoutly garrisoned and well provisioned as thou doubtless art, we can soon raise willing hearts and hands enew in Stradawn, to force thee to a speedy surrender."

"Thou shalt do so then at the price of the murder of this thy child!" exclaimed the lady, lifting up the poor little innocent on high. "If but a single arrow be discharged against us, the tender flesh of this thy babe shall be the clout that shall receive it—and if but one burning brand be thrown, this shall be the very first food given to the conflagration. It is *thy* child. I hate it as being thine. No mother's feelings, therefore, shall hinder me from using its little body as the bulwark of our safety, and as the rampart of our security!"

"Fiend that thou art!" cried Sir Walter. "Let not harm fall on the innocent babe of thy womb! Give me but my child, and I shall retire and leave thee scaithless, and to such peace as thy guilty soul may command. Oh, harm not the babe, but let me clasp it in these arms!"

"Ha, ha, ha! a pretty nurse thou wouldst have me provide for the urchin!" cried the lady, bitterly. "No, no, its body is our most potent shield, I tell thee, and thou shalt never win in here, till thou hast opened thy bloody way through the portal of its little heart. Shoot, if thou wilt, then, for this shall be thy mark."

"Oh, fiend! Oh, demon, in woman's shape!" cried Sir Walter, in anguish. "How was I ever inveigled into thy toils! Terribly, indeed, am I punished for the sins of my youth! But thou wilt yet meet with thy reward! Fiend that thou art, I say thou shalt——"

"Nay, then, thou shalt have thy reward, and that straightway!" cried the lady, interrupting him. "Shoot, archers! let him have his reward, promptly and powerfully delivered from your well-strung bows!—Shoot, I say, archers!"

A flight of arrows instantly came whizzing about them. Several of these rang upon their mail-shirts, others slightly wounded their horses, but one found its way through a faulty link, to the very heart of Sir Walter Stewart's second attendant, who fell lifeless from his horse. Again came the arrows thick upon them, their barbed points prying about them, as it were, like wasps, as if in search of any weaker part or interval, through which they might most easily and certainly sting them to death. There was no time to be lost. The faithful Ronald seized Sir Walter Stewart's rein, and urging on the Knight's horse and his own at full speed, he gallopped straight off along the terrace, and so he succeeded in placing his master entirely beyond all hazard, ere yet the bewilderment of his keen and poignant feelings permitted him very well to know what had befallen him. And then, leading his horse in a slanting direction, down the steep and grassy slope, and across the river, they joined their party, and drew off under several ineffectual discharges of the ill-served and ill-directed falconet.

With a heart depressed by grief and mortification, Sir Walter Stewart had now nothing left for it, but to return on his way to Huntly Castle. As he moved down the valley, the roofless walls of poor Alice Asher's cottage arrested his eyes, rising bare and blackened from among the wood, on the brow of the isolated hill where they stood. The whole of the harrowing scene of that murderous burning recurred to his recollection. His soul was filled with affliction, and his heart became heavy, and sank within him, from the poignant admonitions of that conscience, which plainly and honestly told him, that if he had sown more honourable and virtuous conduct in his youth, he might now have been reaping pure and unalloyed happiness, instead of that misery, which threatened to cling to him, like a poisoned garment, to the end of his days. He felt that he had blighted the spring of his own life: that all sunshine had departed from him for ever; and that all now before him was dark and chilling winter. The only hope he could dare to cherish now, was that of obtaining mercy, through the merits of a blessed Saviour, and a deep and

heartfelt repentance. Giving way to the full indulgence of such thoughts as these, his heart began to sicken at the world. In sorrow and in silence he pursued his way towards Huntly Castle; and, long ere he had reached the residence of his friend the Earl, he had taken up his firm and unalterable resolution.

Acting upon this, he craved a private interview with the Earl that very evening; and, having retired to his apartment with him, he unfolded his mind fully to his friendly ear—gave over to him the charge of all his papers and charters, and prepared every thing for executing a deed, by which his Lordship was made sole trustee over his estates, for the behoof of his infant son, with full powers to manage and direct all matters belonging to them, and, at the same time, making the Earl himself heir of all, in the event of the child's death. Some days afterwards, he put the last formal signature and seal to all this,—not without great, but vain expostulation on the part of Lord Huntly,—and, having done so, he declared his fixed determination to depart the very next morning for the

Continent, where he had resolved to bury himself for ever within the cloisters of a monastery.

That night, previous to Sir Walter Stewart's departure, was a melancholy one for the two friends; and their parting next morning was still more sad.

The Knight's horses and attendants were already drawn up in the court-yard, and the Earl's men were thronging around them to bid them farewell, when a horseman rode into it, bearing a woman on a pad behind his saddle. The lady was veiled, and muffled up in a mantle; but, though the form was sufficiently light and delicate, and that of the youth also much more compact and athletic than gross or heavy, the good grey steed that bore this double weight, showed unequivocal symptoms of the long, rapid, and distressing journey he had undergone.

"Ha! we are yet in time?" cried the young man in a tone of enquiry. "Sir Walter Stewart is still here, is he not?"

"He is still here; but he is on the very eve of his departure for a foreign land," replied the esquire, in a grave and pensive tone and manner.

"I would fain speak a few words to him," said the youth, lighting down, and then lifting the lady from her pillion.

"I fear that may hardly be," said the esquire; "these last minutes of parting converse between Sir Walter Stewart and the Earl of Huntly, are, I warrant me, every one of them worth a purse of gold."

"So are they all the more valuable to me for the doing of mine errand," said the youth, with an air of command, which seemed naturally to belong to him. "Here, take this ring, so please thee. Take it to Sir Walter Stewart, and say that its owner bides without, and would fain have a short audience of him ere he goes."

"I will do your bidding, fair sir," said the squire, courteously; "though I know not well how mine embassage may be received; for, if I mistake not, the Earl and the Knight are shut up alone together in deep and important conference."

The esquire was in the right. The parting moments of these friends were precious, and occupied in most interesting talk. The Earl of Huntly had been using them in pouring out all

his eloquence to induce Sir Walter Stewart, even yet, at this the eleventh hour, to abandon his resolution of going into a monastery, and to prevail on him to remain at home, and to resume the rights and the control of his estates. He urged it upon him, that he owed it to his country, as well as to his own just vengeance against Cochran, and the King's other favourites, to join with him and the rest of the nobles in the plots which they were hatching for their destruction.

" It will be a sweet revenge for thee," said the Earl; " a most sweet revenge, I say, for thee, to have James suing to thee for mercy, for the lives of those very minions who have so conspired together for thy ruin."

" Nay, press me not, dear Huntly," replied Sir Walter Stewart; " though the King hath been blind and fickle, yet I cannot forget his long-exerted kindness to me. And as for vengeance, I trust that the exercise to which I have subjected my soul for these last few nights, hath conjured all such unholy and unchristian passions

forth from my bosom. But to extinguish in thee all farther vain hope that I may be brought to yield to thy friendly entreaty, I will now tell thee that I last night took a solemn vow, on my knees, with mine eyes upon the blessed crucifix, and my right hand upon the open Evangile, that I would henceforth flee from the world, and dedicate myself to God."

"With such a vow upon thee," replied Huntly —"With a vow so solemnly taken, I can urge thee no more."

"Then let my parting words entreat thee not to harm the King," said Sir Walter Stewart. "Harm not the King, and hurt not one hair of the head of Ramsay of Balmain, for he is a gentleman, and my very dear friend, and one indeed to whose friendly warning I have owed my life!"

"There is no intention of hurting James," said Huntly, coldly; "and as for Ramsay, thou hast said enough, in these last few words of thine, to make me sacrifice my life to save him, if he should be brought into peril."

"Thanks, thanks, my noble friend," said Sir Walter, "this promise of thine gives me comfort in the certainty of Ramsay's safety."

"Who knocks there?" cried Lord Huntly. "Did I not say that we must be private?"

"A messenger with some errand of moment for Sir Walter Stewart," replied the Squire.

"Come in, and tell us who and what he may be," replied Lord Huntly.

"He desired me to deliver this ring into Sir Walter's own hand," said the Squire, entering and presenting it to the Knight.

"Ha!" cried the Knight, the moment he threw his eyes on it, "give him entrance without a moment's delay. My Lord, this is my boy Charley Stewart, who went abroad in the service of the royal Duke of Albany. I thank the saints that he is alive! I rejoice that I shall once more behold him, for I feared that something fatal had befallen him. It is well that he hath thus come, so opportunely, else, in my bewilderment, he might have lost his share of that which he hath so well deserved at my hands."

"It is well, indeed, that he hath come, then," replied the Earl, "for, if I mistake not, he is a young man worthy of the stock he hath sprung from. The Duke of Albany, I remember, spoke well of him from France, some little time after his arrival there."

"His Highness vouchsafed to do so," replied Sir Walter. "But it is so long since, that now I burn to behold the boy once more, and to see, with mine own eyes, what improvement foreign nurture hath done on him."

"And I," said the Earl, "am especially curious to hear how his royal master the Duke hath sped, and whether he may yet talk of returning to his country, and trusting his person to the protection of the Scottish nobles. But here comes the youth."

"Charley, my boy!—my son! thank God that thou art alive! I rejoice to behold thee again once more!" cried Sir Walter, hurrying forward to embrace him, with deep emotion. "I am glad, most glad, thou art come!"

"Your blessing, father!" cried Charley, who having entered the room with the veiled lady on

his arm, quitted her at the door, and rushed forward to meet and to throw himself on his knees before Sir Walter.

"Thou hast it, boy!" replied the Knight, raising him up, and clasping him tenderly to his breast. "Thou hast it most sincerely. Recent melancholy events have now made thee doubly dear to me. But say, why is it that I have heard nought of thee for so long a time? Why is it that thou wert as silent in thy communication as if thou hadst been dead? Often did I of late seek tidings of thee of De Tremouille, but so much in vain did I seek them, that I more than half believed that some fatal calamity had befallen thee. Come, say how hath it fared with thee and thy royal master, and where, and wherefore, hast thou left him?"

"With your leave, dear father, and that of this noble Earl," replied Charley, "I shall hastily run over the outline of our history.—A fair wind bore us to France, where we were soon transported to Paris. There we were well received, and well lodged, at the sign of the Cock, in the street of St. Martin, and all manner of ex-

penses were defrayed from the French treasury, for the Duke and his attendants, to the number of twelve persons. We lived a merry life, mingling in all the shows and pageants of the French court, and proving our horsemanship with the French cavaliers, with no manner of disgrace on my humble part, and with great honour on the part of my royal master. But soon after this, some paltry jealousies and suspicions broke out against us, fostered, no doubt, by certain Scots, who had the secret ear of the King of France, and the secret authority of James of Scotland. Prudence led the royal Duke to travel in the provinces for a time, and under the disguise of an errant knight, he wandered about, with me as his esquire, doing feats of arms every where. Then it was that De Tremouille could report nothing of me, for I was altogether in disguise, doing the most agreeable service to my high and most kind master."

"How camest thou to leave so good and honourable a service then?" demanded the Knight.

"Simply on this ground," replied Charley. "A certain correspondence began to arise be-

tween my royal master and Edward of England. Whilst this was going on, the Duke, who always showed most kindly towards me, took me one day into his private apartment, and told me in confidential secrecy, that a certain treaty was on foot between him and the English king, with the intent of their uniting to make war upon Scotland. I was largely promised wealth and honours if I would follow his Highness to England. But, albeit that I should have been fain to have followed him all over the world, I could in nowise bring myself to fight against the country of my birth, or against that country which held my father, and whose king I held to be my father's friend—that country which held her—a—a—that country, I mean, which was a—dear to me from many a tender recollection—and that country, above all, which held my much loved and most affectionate and most revered mother."

"Poor, kind, and amiable boy!" murmured Sir Walter Stewart, groaning deeply, "little knowest thou what a shock thou hast yet to receive!"

"I could not fight against such a land," con-

tinued Charley, without observing this scarcely audible interruption. " And on my so declaring this, and setting forth my reasons before my royal master, he kindly, and, as he was pleased to say, with regret, gave me his princely licence to depart; and as he had little to bestow, he honoured me by putting this massive gold chain around my neck, and I parted from him, after receiving his gracious thanks for the fidelity of my services, and with many friendly commendations on the Duke's part to you. I left him in the more honourable, yet not more faithful, hands, of Monipeny and Concressault, who are now with him. Having taken ship and reached the shores of Scotland, I made the best of my way to my native Strath, and there, learning that thou hadst but recently left it, I hasted, with all speed, to follow thee hither."

" Thou hast well judged, and well acted, my dear boy!" said the Knight, embracing him. " By mine honour, but thou dost prove, by thy words, that thy head hath gained as much in solid sense as thy person and manners have gathered in strength and grace. My Lord of

Huntly, since Charley hath thus, by God's mercy, turned up alive, thou must now see done for him, that which I, in such a case provided, as I already told thee. To thee then I leave it to see him duly enfeoffed in the place and lands of Kilmaichly, on a part of which he was born, and this I have bestowed upon him and his heirs in property for ever."

"Be assured I shall see this desire of thine most strictly executed," said Lord Huntly.

"Thanks, thanks, most gracious father!" cried Charles Stewart, throwing himself again upon Sir Walter's neck. "Yet would I consider it a far greater boon, to be allowed to follow thee in whatever emprise thou mayst now be bound to."

"That which I am boune after, boy, is too solemn for thy years," replied Sir Walter Stewart, gravely. "Thou art as yet too young to quit the haunts of men, and sins hast thou but few to drive thee thence, unless mine be visited upon thee. But, hold! thou wouldst seem to have a fair companion there. Tell me, I pray thee, hast thou brought a French wife

with thee? Alas, rash youth, thou knowest not what perils are to be found within the silken meshes of the toils of matrimony! Hath not thine own past experience of the fickle nature of woman cured thee of love?"

"Nay, nay, my good and honoured father," replied Charley, "so far as I am concerned, I have learned, to my great joy, though to my sad remorse and contrition, that woman's love, when pure and virtuous, is inextinguishable by all the storms and tides of adverse fate. My Rosa was true, and she yet lives for me and me alone, and I was the rash insane tool of one who was more an evil spirit than a woman. Thanks be to God, too, that I have not the crime of murder on my conscience, for I have learned that my benefactor, Sir Piers Gordon, yet lives."

"Sir Piers Gordon!" exclaimed Huntly, in surprise, "Art thou then the youth who had so nearly deprived me of so valuable a kinsman and dependant? Trust me, young man, had the blow been fatal, I could not easily have forgiven thee."

"My Lord, I could never have forgiven my-

self," said Charley. "But now I hope to prove to Sir Piers my gratitude, as well as my penitence, if he will vouchsafe to pardon me, and to receive me again into his friendship."

"I think thou mayest safely reckon upon him," said Huntly, "especially with my intercession for thee."

"Is this thy Rosa, then, boy?" demanded Sir Walter Stewart, pointing to the veiled lady. "And is she already thy wedded wife? Why all this mystery? Lead her hither, that we may see and become acquainted with her."

"It is not Rosa," replied Charley, solemnly, as he retired to the farther part of the room, and led forward the lady trembling beneath her veil. "It is not Rosa, nor is Rosa as yet my wife. She whom I would now introduce to you is no wife, nor hath she ever been bound by any such holy ties—yet would she crave thy blessing, and one kind word of comfort from thee," and with this he gently removed the veil from her head.

"Holy Virgin, and sacred ministers of Almighty Providence, what do I behold!" exclaimed Sir Walter Stewart, in amazement, "Alice

Asher!—and in life! My beloved Alice, can it indeed be thee?" and then rushing forward to embrace her, he cried—"It is, it is my Alice!"

"Oh! this more than repays me for a life of wretchedness," said Alice, weeping, and warmly responding to his emotions. "A mother's pride, which I have in my boy, would not let me remain behind him; and the priest gave me licence. I wished to behold him in his father's arms, and my fond and foolish heart hath been gratified beyond its deserts. May blessings be showered down upon thee for what thou hast done!" continued she, sinking on her knees before him, "May blessings here, and eternal happiness hereafter, be thy portion!"

"Rise, my fair, my beloved, my much injured Alice!" cried the Knight, raising her gently up, and again tenderly embracing her. "This is indeed a day of joy! But tell me how it is that mine eyes thus gladly behold thee, when they have now so long wept for thy supposed death by that murderous and traitorous fire?"

"Providence interfered to save my worthless life," replied Alice. "It so happened, that, on

the very evening before the burning, I chanced to go up into Glen-Livat to visit the good widow MacDermot and her daughter Rosa, whose society was always balm to me, and especially so because their favourite talk was ever of mine absent Charley. As I was thus going away from home, my serving-maiden took in a girl, a friend of hers, to be company for her loneliness, and thus, both these innocent creatures perished, whilst I escaped. But the ways of Heaven are inscrutable. Thus it was that two half-consumed corpses were discovered, which led to the belief of my death; and then it was that terror for the Lady of Drummin made me dread to contradict the rumour, and compelled me to live in concealment."

"Enough it is that thou art yet alive, my beloved Alice!" cried Sir Walter Stewart, carried altogether away by the wildest feelings of joy. "Dearest, we shall yet be happy!—Thou shalt yet be——"

"Oh, say!—speak!" said Alice, greatly agitated. "What—what wouldst thou say?"

"What—what have I said?" continued Sir

Walter, sinking in tone and manner into those of deep despondency. "What!—said I that we should yet be happy?—that thou shouldst yet be my wife. Alas!—no, no, no—I forgot. It cannot be. My vow—my vow—my solemn vow, already registered in Heaven! Would that I had known all this ere I had made it! Would that I had but known that thou wer't still alive! But now, even these regrets and repinings become sinful. The hand of Providence is in it, and God's holy will be done. The vow—the solemn vow which I recorded in Heaven must be fulfilled. Alice, dearest of human beings, I cannot now be thine! I have henceforth dedicated myself to the service of the Most High. I depart this very day to make good my vow, by throwing myself into a foreign monastery."

"The will of the Lord be done!" said Alice Asher, in a hollow voice of intense suffering, whilst, pale and trembling, she bowed her head and sank into a chair, where a deluge of tears gave vent to her emotions. "The will of the Lord be done! And why should it be otherwise?

I have more than deserved all those sufferings and trials, which God, in his justice and wisdom, hath been pleased to bring upon me, and why should I wickedly murmur? As thou sayest, the finger of God is in it. May he sanctify his chastisement for our salvation, and so let me cheerfully kiss the rod of his fatherly correction."

"Angel that thou art!" cried Sir Walter, greatly moved. "Oh, what wouldst thou not have been, but for me, villain that I was! Thy sin was mine. On my head must fall the whole of thy guilt. Thou wert young and pure, as a creature of heaven. On my head must fall all the wrath of an offended God; and mine, therefore, must be the penance. Return then to resume thine innocent and peaceful life. Thou hast a firm and able protector in thy son, whose strong arm, and upright heart, shall shield thee from all harm. In due time, he must marry Rosa MacDermot, and thou mayst yet live happily to see thy grandchildren growing up, like goodly plants, around thee. Pray for me in thy private hours of converse with the Almighty, that he may yet extend his mercy to me,

a repentant sinner. My orisons shall never cease to rise for thee. And now, this last holy kiss, may, without guilt, be permitted to us. May God for ever bless and preserve thee! And—now—now—farewell for ever!"

Alice flew into his arms with a frantic hysterical laugh; and after a long, a silent, and a last embrace, Sir Walter Stewart, gently unfolding himself from her, rushed with a broken heart from the apartment, followed by his son and Lord Huntly, leaving Alice Asher, who sank helpless into a chair, pale, motionless, and silent, as if death had suddenly fallen upon her. The Knight sprang into his saddle; Huntly silently but warmly squeezed his hand; Charley Stewart embraced his manly limb, as he put his foot into the stirrup—and his father stooped from his seat, and tenderly kissed his brow, and blessed him, ere he dashed his spur-rowels into the sides of his steed, and galloped out of the court-yard, with his followers behind him.

Let us now return to the Castle of Drummin.—On that very night in which the depressed and repentant Sir Walter was solemnly

dedicating himself, at Huntly Castle, to the service of God, she who had been his lady retired to rest in her chamber, with her infant child placed in a cradle beside her couch. A lamp, which burned on a table near her, enabled her to read over again the letter which she had received from Cochran, the new Earl of Mar; and, after she had done so, she laid her head back upon the pillow to ruminate upon its contents, and to resign herself to the enjoyment of those visions of ambition to which it had given birth. By degrees, sleep overpowered her, and her waking thoughts began gradually to resolve themselves into wild, floating, and ill-connected dreams. After many strange and abrupt changes, she imagined that she was led to the altar by the Earl of Mar. Both were dressed in all the pomp that befitted the rank of such a bridegroom and bride. The King and Queen were present; and all things were prepared for the nuptial ceremony. But, when the marriage service proceeded, both the Earl and Lady made vain and ineffectual efforts to join hands. As she struggled to accomplish this, she suddenly perceived, that

the gorgeous golden collar which surrounded the Earl's neck, was changed into a halter of horse hair. She stared with wonder upon him; and, as she did so, his coarse, ruddy features became pale, and fixed, and corpse-like, and he was lifted slowly from before her, as if some powerful and unseen hand had raised him from the ground by the halter, until he disappeared altogether from her sight. She struggled fearfully. The priests, the King, and the Queen, and the other personages who were present at the bridal, faded away before her. Her heart grew cold within her from fear and very loneliness. Suddenly the candles on the altar, and the other lights in the church, blazed up miraculously, till their pointed flames were blunted and flattened on the vaulted roof. She endeavoured to shriek aloud, but no utterance could she give to her voice, whilst horrid laughter echoed through the surrounding aislés, and demoniac faces mocked and gibbered at her from behind the massive pillars. A complete and most unaccountable change immediately took place; and she beheld a burning cottage before her. Screams

were heard from within the walls, and she would have fain shut her eyes from the sight, and stopped her ears from the sound; but she could do neither. She was in an agony which no human tongue can describe. At length, the figure of a woman, of angelic beauty and expression of countenance, and ethereal airiness of form, shot upwards, as if borne to heaven by the rising column of fire. The screams continued from within the burning walls. They pierced her ears horribly, and the flames darted around her on all sides, scorching her face and hands, and setting fire to her garments; and still all her efforts were vain to move herself from the spot, so as to withdraw from their influence. Half suffocated, she struggled and toiled to escape from them; and being at last awakened by her efforts, she was, for one moment, conscious that she was in the midst of a real conflagration. In that one moment was concentrated the whole remorse of her wicked life—and it was terrible! She heard the cries of her perishing babe; and being herself so choked as to be unable for exertion, she speedily became

an easy and helpless prey to the devouring element. The drapery of her bed, which she had put aside in order to read the letter, had fallen back into its place; and having thus caught fire from the lamp, the flames had thence communicated to the cradle and to the bed; and by the time the alarm of the conflagration had been given throughout the Castle, and traced to its source, the lady and her innocent babe, and every thing within the apartment, had been consumed to ashes.

After such an occurrence as this, it may easily be conceived that the gates of Drummin were thrown open to the Earl of Huntly, the moment he appeared with a strong force before it. He staid but a few days there, to arrange such business as his new possessions demanded of him. The most prominent and important part of this was, to see Charles Stewart regularly infeoffed in his property of Kilmaichly, after which he bestowed knighthood upon him; and having accomplished all this, the Earl hastened southwards, to lend his powerful aid in perfecting those plots which were then ripening among the

discontented nobles, and which terminated with the summary execution of Cochran, and the other minions of King James the Third, over the Bridge of Lauder. That the life or person of Ramsay were preserved untouched, may have been in a great measure owing to the last parting injunctions of his friend Sir Walter Stewart.

The new Knight of Kilmaichly quickly proceeded to build himself a suitable dwelling, and that was no sooner in a habitable state, than he brought that courtship, which he began with Rosa MacDermot, before she was carried off from the harvest-rig by the eagle, to a proper period, by a mutual submission of the parties to that holy yoke, which was imposed upon them by the priest, who then lived at Dounan. The poor old Howlet's prophecy was thus verified, by Rosa MacDermot thus becoming a *landed lady*, and *marrying a man with a knight's spurs at his heels*, and this, too, precisely according to the happy interpretation which the Lady Kilmaichly had herself put upon it. Among the few people who were bidden to the marriage, and certainly one who was by no means the least happy or jovial

among the company, was the good old knight Sir Piers Gordon. Nor was his niece, the Lady Marcella, absent, though, strange to say, she was very much metamorphosed from what she once was. Some time after those events, which caused the flight of Charley Stewart to Edinburgh, and which deprived her of all farther hope of him, she was one day riding with her uncle's retainers, when they fell in accidentally with a party of Catteranes. She charged them boldly at the head of her people, and, in the midst of the mellée, she had one eye scooped out by the point of a lance, and half of her nose, and a considerable portion of one cheek, carried off by the slash of a claymore, and, had it not been for the intrepidity of an honest, stalwart, broad-shouldered, and wide-chested man-at-arms, who came to her rescue, beat off the enemy single-handed, and then carried her off in his brawny arms, it is probable that she might have died gloriously upon the battle-field. Recovering from her wounds, the bravery of this hero touched her heart; and, notwithstanding the loss of so many of her charms,

the bold yeoman, declaring that there was quite enough left of her to make a very fine woman still, and being altogether undeterred by her Amazonian temper, he had no scruple in buckling with the heiress of Sir Piers Gordon. Although a good-natured fellow, he was by no means a man to be bullied. A very great reformation was therefore speedily worked upon her disposition; and by the time she appeared as a guest at the marriage of Sir Charles Stewart of Kilmaichly, she exhibited the countenance of a gorgon, with a temper and spirit subdued and gentle as those of a lamb.

I have little to add now, gentlemen, to this true history, except to recount to you a very curious occurrence, that took place soon after Sir Charles Stewart and his lady were married, and comfortably settled at Kilmaichly, and which threatened to interrupt the peacefulness of their lives for a time. A dispute arose between Sir Charles's people and those of the Laird of Ballindalloch, about the march between the farm of Ballanluig, belonging to Kilmaichly, and Craigroy, which was the property of his

powerful neighbour. The House of Ballindalloch being likely to prove too strong for him, in a matter which he foresaw must probably be determined by the arm of force, the prudent Sir Charles took the precaution to send a messenger into Athol, to his father's relative, the Laird of Fincastle, craving his aid. To his no small comfort, his petition was readily granted, and Fincastle sent him sixty well-armed men, and a capital piper, to stir up their souls to battle. Sir Charles being now in every respect a match for his opponent, turned out bravely to make good his plea, whilst Ballindalloch came with an equal force to dispute the point. Each of the two parties reached its respective ground at night, with the intent of joining battle by the earliest dawn. That of Sir Charles Stewart took up its position in and about a kiln, whilst Ballindalloch's little army was similarly posted at or near a house at no great distance. Both sides were breathing horrid war, and anticipating dreadful slaughter, when daylight should enable them to see each other, for the night was dark as pitch. Some time before daybreak, the

lightning flashed, and a fearful peal of thunder crashed suddenly over their heads, so that every man present was stricken with awe. A water-spout then broke upon the hills, and came down upon them so tremendously, as to produce a roaring noise, as if a sea had been descending upon them. Both sides were appalled, and sinking in terror upon their knees, they remained in that position until the morning dawned. By that time the sky had cleared, and the sun rose smiling, and then it was, that they beheld by his light, that a large and frightful ravine had been cut out between them, by the water-spout, where nothing of the sort had existed before. Both parties felt that Providence had interfered to settle their dispute, and to save the effusion of human blood. Accordingly the two leaders at once agreed, that the ravine thus strangely and miraculously opened, by the sudden descent of this transient torrent, from the hills, should be the march between their properties in all time coming; and thus, they who came to the ground as deadly foes, separated as sworn brethren and allies.

Thus it seemed, that Heaven itself had ruled, that peace should be secured to those who so well merited it, and who so well knew how to enjoy it; and the felicity of Sir Charles Stewart and his lady was complete. Years rolled on, and still the sunshine of their countenances, aye, and the sunshine of the faces of their merry children, would often conjure up an angelic smile of gratitude, upon the pale and pensive features of Alice Asher. Nor were the grateful feelings of this highly favoured family expended in barren expressions, for all around them were loud in praise of their hospitality, benevolence, and charity.

In the course of some generations Kilmaichly fell to an heiress, and the Laird of Ballindalloch having married her, she carried the estate into that family where it now remains.

THE AUTHOR FLOORED.

It is not very easy to tell how we all bestowed ourselves after Serjeant Archy Stewart's story of Tàillear-Crubach, but it was no sooner brought to a close, than each of us proceeded to exert his own ingenuity, in making up a bed for himself. Some things there were indeed resembling beds in an upper room, but those who occupied them were perhaps not much more fortunate than those who chose a dry, and tolerably even corner of the floor, and there disposed of themselves, rolled up in their plaids. My own experience tells me, that sweeter, sounder, or more refreshing repose is nowhere to be enjoyed, than on such a bed as this, especially after fatigue;

and the great proof of its excellence, upon the present occasion, was, that five minutes did not elapse, ere we had all succeeded in our courtship of that sleep which our day's walk, and the lateness of the hour, had conspired to make it no very difficult matter for us to woo. Next morning, the roaring of the Aven, now turbid and discoloured, and flowing wide over the haughs, the rain still drizzling on, and the wet air and gloomy sky, and the plashy footing on the meadow where Clifford ventured out to experiment and explore, whilst we stood clustered within the door, with our heads out, to mark his proceedings, very speedily made us draw them back again, with a determined resolution to see a fairer promise of weather, before we should venture to thrust them forth to tempt our fate in travel.

CLIFFORD (*mincing his steps on tiptoe through a flock of ducklings rejoicing clamorously in the wet.*) Fine weather for you young gentlemen, indeed! Well, if the day will neither fish nor walk, we may be thankful that we are well provisioned with food both for the body and the mind.

DOMINIE.—That is a great consolation indeed, Mr. Clifford, and leaves us little to be pitied.

CLIFFORD.—Come, then, let us have breakfast; and, after that, let us resume our sitting of last night, and, since we cannot budge out, let us spend the day rationally, with legends and cigars, at Inchrory.

AUTHOR.—Pray, Mr. Serjeant, what is supposed to be the origin of the name of Inchrory?

SERGEANT.—Why, sir, the place was so called from a certain Rory Mackenzie of Turfearabrad, or Fairburn, as it is called in modern language, who, about the sixteen hundred or so, was wont to drive great herds of cattle from his place in Ross-shire to the south country markets, by this way up Glen-Aven. His story is a sad one.

GRANT.—Pray let us have it, Archy.

SERJEANT.—With your leave, sir, I'll rather tell it to you on our way up the glen, when we come near to the place where the cruel deed was done. You will be the better able to understand some of its most important circumstances.

AUTHOR.—You are right, Serjeant.

CLIFFORD (*taking out his tablets.*)—Well, Mr. Serjeant, I'll book you for it, at all events.—Rory Mackenzie of Turfearabrad.

SERJEANT.—I'll not forget it, sir. But, in the meanwhile, gentlemen, I may tell you, that as this Rory Mackenzie used to bring his beasts up this glen, which, as I formerly mentioned, was so full of woods at that time as to make an open patch of pasture a thing of great value, he was so tempted by the fineness and richness of the grass on the meadow that lies hereabouts, all produced, as you will naturally see, from the marly matter brought down upon it by the streams from the hill, that he used to make a regular practice of lodging himself and his animals here for some days, in order to rest and refresh them for their journey; and so, at last, the place got its name from him. But there was no house here in his day.

DOMINIE.—We have vurra great reason to be thankful, Serjeant, that we have so good a house over our heads now, then.

CLIFFORD.—House! why in such weather, a house like this in the wilderness is as good as a

palace in a city. Soldier though I be, I by no means envy Rory, the laird of Turfearabrad, his sylvan bivouacks. What think you, Mr. Serjeant?

SERJEANT.—Troth, sir, I can lie out when I am obliged to do it. But I am grown old enough now to think, that, in an ill day, the nearer to the fire-side the better, and still better is it in an ill night. What say you to that, Mr. Macpherson?

DOMINIE.—If my last night's scramble hither, and the deep mud of that filthy peat pot into which I fell, has not convinced me of that truth, Serjeant, I must be a stubborn bubo indeed.

CLIFFORD.—Truth is generally found at the bottom of a well, but to find it, as you seem to have done, at the bottom of a peat pot, is a new discovery, Mr. Macpherson.

CLIFFORD (*after all are done with breakfast.*)—Come, then, gentlemen, shall we adjourn to the fire, and commence our sitting?

GRANT.—Allons!

AUTHOR.—Now, my good woman, take away

these things, and make the room a little tidy, and then bring us plenty of peats.

CLIFFORD.—Aye, that will do.

GRANT.—Who is to be story-teller?

CLIFFORD.—Mr. Macpherson is the man. Now then, Mr. Macpherson, your Serjeant John Smith is the first for duty. He may mount guard as speedily as you please.

DOMINIE.—He shall obey the captain's orders without a moment's delay.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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